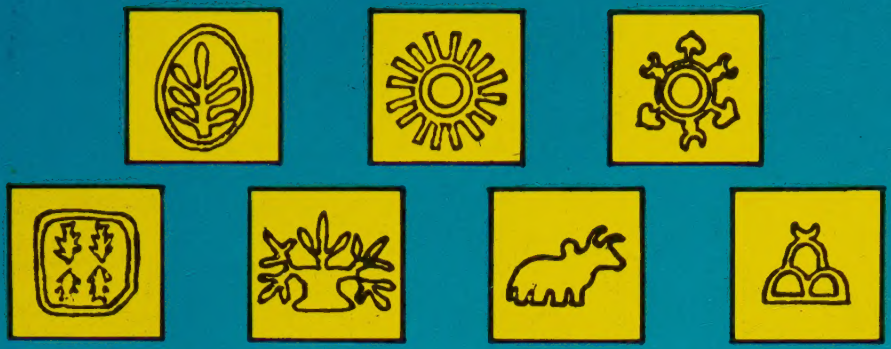

CHILDREN'S HISTORY OF INDIA

SHEILA DHAR

Ambika Shete

CHILDREN'S HISTORY OF INDIA

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PUBLICATIONS DIVISION
MINISTRY OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING
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I have looked through this little book and have liked it. We lack good books on the history of India, more especially for children. This book fills a vacuum and fills it well. The language is easy and suited to young boys and girls.

August 1, 1960
New Delhi.

— Jawaharlal Nehru

ABOUT THIS BOOK

This is a brief introduction to Indian history for the very young reader. It is designed specially for the school-going child between nine and fourteen years of age. The aim here is more to stimulate interest in the study of history than to present a comprehensive survey of facts. To achieve this purpose the narrative has been kept as graphic as possible, simple language has been used, names have been kept at the minimum, and no dates have been used at all. However, an idea of the sequence of events is communicated throughout the book. There is also an illustrated chart at the end to explain what a date is.

The chapter, India Today, has been revised to give the reader the latest information.

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THINKING ABOUT TIME

There was a time when you were not born, when your mother was herself a child. And, of course, there must have been a time when she was not born either, nor your grandmother, nor your great-grandmother. How old are you? If you are ten or twelve, your mother must be about thirty years old. And your mother's mother perhaps fifty or sixty years. Can you imagine what it must have been like a hundred years ago? A hundred years seems a very long time. It is as long as a man can live. But countries are much older than men, and a hundred years is very little time in their lives. Some countries are older than others. The country in which we live is one of the oldest in the whole world, but we cannot be sure exactly how old. Can you guess how old India is?

People have been living in India for thousands and thousands of years. We know something about people who lived nearly five thousand years ago. We know how they lived, and what they did. If you could, by some magic, meet the children of those days you would not find them very different from you. This is very remarkable. We started to become the people we are today right at the beginning of India's history. This is what we mean when we say that India has a continuous history of nearly five thousand years. There are not many countries with a history so old.

Have you ever counted the colours in a rainbow? It has many, but they are all a part of the rainbow, and you cannot separate them. If you tried to take even one colour away, the whole rainbow would disappear. In some ways, our country is like the rainbow. People of many races have come to India at different times. There came the Aryans; after them people from Central Asia and Mongolia and other countries. Some came to conquer; they fought with the people who were already living in the country. Others came to travel and see the country. Still others came to study at India's great universities. But in the end India accepted all those who came from outside to make India their home. Their way of life and their ideas were slowly accepted

by the country, and made her own. The newcomers too settled down and began to think of India as their new home. This happened again and again through the ages. As a result everything we call Indian today is made up of many strands, just like the rainbow.

All this did not happen in a day; it took thousands of years. It is not easy to think of thousands of years, is it? That is what history tries to do. History is just a long, long story. Instead of being about fairy princes and magic carpets, it is about real people. And it is a story that tries to be true.

It is a wonderful story, the story of India, and you must know it for many reasons. Great men and women have been born here, and their greatness in a way belongs to you. It is your heritage and you can be proud of it. There have been times in our history of which we cannot be so proud, but these also you must know about. To know everything about ourselves we must know our past — both what is good about it and what is bad.

But don't you always want to hear a story from the very beginning?

DIGGING UP THE PAST

Right at the beginning of our story is the land of India which we love. The ordinary people and the great men, the brave kings and the saints, about whom you will read, also love this same land and called it home.

Some day you will travel and see the whole country for yourself. But until then let us look at India on the map.

It looks like a huge triangle. The great Himalaya mountains in the north form one side; the western coast washed by the Arabian Sea forms the second side; the eastern coast on the Bay of Bengal is the third. Just below the Himalayas are rich plains through which flow three big rivers — the Indus, the Ganga and the Brahmaputra. India gets her name from the Indus, also called Sindu. It has had much to do with the story of our country. But a part of the land through which it flows was separated from India some years ago and came to be called Pakistan. Across the middle of the country lie the Vindhya mountains, separating the north from the south. The big rivers south of these mountains are Narmada, Tapti, Mahanadi, Godavari, Krishna and Kaveri. The tip of land at the extreme south is called Kanya Kumari. Beyond it is the Indian Ocean.

Before people knew how to make ships, the only way to come to India was across the mountains in the north. But the Himalayas, as you know, are the highest mountains in the world and it was not easy to cross them. In these mountains there are small gaps called passes. It is through these passes that large numbers of people were able to come into the country from time to time. If the Himalayas had not been there at all, the whole story of India might have been different.

The Himalayas and the sea, mighty boundaries given to us by nature, have held India together as one country through the ages. This holding together is a remarkable thing, because India is a very large country. It has many kinds of scenery and many kinds of climate. It has many different kinds

of people who speak different languages, wear different dresses and eat different kinds of food. Many belong to families which came to India from far-off places, a long time ago. How long ago, nobody can say exactly.

But how do we know about things which happened so far back? From books, from songs, from pictures, and from buildings such as houses and temples. All these help us to find out how the big people and the ordinary people lived in the old days. But today there is very little that we know about ancient times because books get torn or eaten up by insects, songs are forgotten, buildings crumble, and even words scratched on rocks are wiped out by wind and water. There was a time when people wrote no books and built no temples. But the pots and pans they used, the beads and bangles they wore and the sharp stones they hunted with are dug up from some places. By studying them, our scholars are able to tell us how the people who used them must have lived. Indeed, by digging in some areas, our scholars have found cities which must have once been large but were destroyed by a flood or a fire. One such ancient city was discovered nearly fifty years ago in Sindh which is now in Pakistan. The villagers who lived round about had for years called this place Mohenjo Daro, the mound of the dead. But buried beneath the mound was a whole city, 5,000 years old.

From what was found in Mohenjo Daro we know that the people who lived there knew how to make bricks. With the bricks they made neat houses for themselves. They could plan cities, and keep them clean by laying drainpipes to take away the dirty water. They built huge public baths for people to wash in, and broad streets for chariots and bullockcarts. They must have been clever craftsmen, because fine pots of clay and weapons made of copper and bronze have been found in the city. They drew figures of animals and gods on pottery and on seals. From these we can guess what animals they knew, what gods they worshipped and what sort of writing they used. Their necklaces of beads, and ornaments of gold and ivory, tell us that they loved beautiful things and knew how to make them. They used cotton for making cloth. They prayed to a Divine Mother and to a god who was very much like Shiva. They knew how to write although we have still not been able to read everything that they wrote.

Sindh (now part of Pakistan) is mostly a dry and barren land but it was not always so. Thousands of years ago it was a green and fertile place. You must wonder how we know this. Well, the drawings on the Mohenjo Daro

seals show animals like the lion, the tiger, the rhinoceros and the elephant. Now, such animals can live only in big forests. And there can be no thick forests without heavy rain.

Other cities like Mohenjo Daro have been discovered. Harappa in Pakistan in one such city. Many of the cities, that belong to this time were built along the river Indus. That is why the people who lived in them are called the people of the Indus Valley. But the cities of the Indus Valley people stretched much farther than Sindh and the Punjab. Experts who have been digging further east and south have found more cities that are like those at Harappa and Mahenjo Daro.

You may not think much of the clay pottery or the bits of copper found in these cities. But do you realize what a great thing it was, 5,000 years ago, to know how to get metal out of ore, and to beat it into any shape you wanted? Or to spin fine cotton yarn and produce cloth? You will realize this when you know that 5,000 years ago people in many other countries of the world were still wild. They had no houses and slept in caves. They had no clothes and wore the skins of animals. They went hunting with clubs made of sharp stones fixed to wooden handles as they did not know how to use metal. They ate raw meat and wild berries and wandered about in the forests. We can, therefore, feel proud that people in our country were clever and skilful even so long ago.

With bricks the people of Mohenjo Daro made neat houses for themselves

THE VEDAS AND THE ARYANS

We saw that one way of knowing about the past is from the books written in ancient times. The oldest books of India, and perhaps of the whole world, are the Vedas. They are of importance not merely because we can know from them how the people lived long ago but because they are books of great wisdom. For thousands of years our people have thought of them as sacred, and they have helped Indians to think deeply and live good lives.

There are altogether four Vedas—the Rig-veda, the Yajur-veda, the Sama-veda and the Atharva-veda. These great books are made up of hymns, which praise the gods, and verses, which teach people how to please the gods through worship, good work and sacrifice. There are beautiful songs in honour of Surya, the sun-god, Indra, the lord of thunder and rain, Agni, the god of fire, Varuna, the god of the sky, and Prajapati, the lord of all creation. But the most important thing the Vedas say is that God is in reality one, even though He is called by different names. The Vedas say: everything that is created is part of God. They tell us that each human being should ever try to know more and grow more wise. The human soul, they say, never dies. But it has to be born again and again in the world until it has done enough good and earned enough merit. Then the soul becomes free from births. It attains moksha or freedom. The way to achieve moksha is through dharma, or doing one's duty, and tapas or meditation. The good man should take sorrow and joy with calmness, control anger and greed, and follow the truth always. All this may sound quite simple. But it is not very easy to understand, even for grown-ups. Many Sanskrit scholars still spend their whole lives studying the meaning of the Vedas. A favourite prayer in the Vedas says: Lead us from falseness to truth, from darkness to light and from death to immortality.

Some of the poems in the Vedas, like the ones praising the loveliness of the dawn, the wonder of the earth and the grandeur of the forest are of great beauty. The meaning of the Vedas is explained in detail in books called the

Upanishads. These were written by the rishis or great sages who spent their lives in forest schools thinking about truth and teaching their students also to do so. At first the Vedas and the Upanishads were not written down. The father who had learnt to sing them aloud from his father taught them to his son. The son, when he grew up, taught them in turn to his son, and so on. In the same way, they passed from guru to disciple. This went on for many, many years until at last all the hymns and mantras in the Vedas and the Upanishads were collected and written down.

As you perhaps know, the Vedas and the Upanishads are written in Sanskrit. Sanskrit was the language of a people who called themselves Aryans. We do not know for certain where the Aryans came from. Their first home may have been in Central Asia or Europe. They came across the mountains with their women and children, their cows and horses, probably in search of a better and warmer home for themselves and their cattle. When the Aryans came, there were already other people living in India. There were the people of the Indus Valley who did not know Sanskrit. There were also people in the valleys of the Yamuna and the Ganga. There must have been many fights between the Aryans and the people already living in the country. But after some time, they made friends and began to live together. The Aryans had been cowherds and fighters. But like the other Indians they soon learnt to live in villages.

They ploughed the land and grew corn. They reared cattle and made milk and butter. They began to make pots and pitchers. They had iron-smiths who could beat metal into shoes for horses' hooves and make iron-ends for ploughs. The Indus Valley people had not known the use of iron. They only used soft copper and bronze. About this time, the use of iron began to spread.

The Aryans did not come to India all at once. Wave after wave of them kept coming in. At first they settled down in the land around the Indus. Soon they spread eastwards along the Yamuna and the Ganga. This part later came to be called Aryavarta. Between the Indus and the Ganga, the Aryans founded kingdoms and built many cities like Hastinapur, Ayodhya, Mithila, Prayag and Varanasi. The Aryan people loved music and adventure. One of their games was to race horse-drawn chariots. But they thought so highly of knowledge and wisdom that they respected rishis even more than kings.

So far, you have been reading about the people who lived in the land of the Indus and the Ganga. What was happening south of the Vindhya mountains all these years? Now you must hear something of the people who lived in this part of India.

In the beginning the people of the south were quite different from the Aryans. They had their own kingdoms; they spoke languages of their own, which were quite different from Sanskrit; and they prayed to their own gods. Their craftsmen were famous for the fine things they could make. These wonderful things were taken in big sailing ships to be sold in other countries across the seas. The people of the south had many rich cities.

As you know, the Aryans in the northern plains spoke Sanskrit and pryaed to their own gods in their own way. Little by little, the Aryans began to cross the Vindhyas and go south. Among them were may rishis. From them the people of the south learnt about the Vedas. As the years passed, the people of the south also took to many of the customs of the Aryans.

There came a day when the north and the south understood each other well and the people all over the country began to live in more or less the same way. Many people in the south learnt Sanskrit. The Aryans also learnt many of the ways of the people of the south, who are called Dravidians. Instead of being made up of the north and the south, India became one great country, as it is today. It took hundreds of years for this to happen.

We have said that the people of the south took to many of the ways of the Aryans. One of the things they took to was the caste system of the Aryans. There were four castes. The priests and those who knew the holy hymns were put in the first caste. They were called the Brahmins. Next came the Kshatriyas, or the warriors. The kings in those days had to be good fighters; so they all came from the Kshatriya caste. The traders and the artisans and the farmers belonged to the third caste, the Vaishyas. The fourth caste were the Shudras, the servants and the labourers.

At first a person's caste depended upon what he did for his living. Since a son did the same work as his father, they were of the same caste. At the time of the Vedas, people of different castes met, talked and ate together. They even married people from the other castes. A man could change his caste. A shopkeeper could learn to be a warrior if he wanted to and he was then taken into the Kshatriya caste. In course of time the rules of the castes

became more and more strict. The priests and warriors began to consider themselves better human beings than the labourers. And all the four castes thought there were some whom they should keep at a distance—the 'untouchables'. The caste system and untouchability were a bad thing because they taught that some human beings were better than others. Because of the caste system the people of India could not stand together, even in times of danger. Many times, in this story, the people of India had to bow down to a common enemy, because they were divided and weak.

TWO GREAT BOOKS

Everyone has heard of Rama and Sita. Many of you in north India must have seen the giant effigy of Ravana being burnt every year at Dussehra. There are processions, fireworks and shouts of joy. On this day Rama, the good king of Ayodhya, defeated and killed Ravana, the wicked ruler of Lanka who had stolen his wife Sita. Many parts of India still celebrate Rama's victory, and all over India people think of him as the perfect man, as one who never failed in his duty.

The Ramayana

The Ramayana is a great book of our people, and it tells the story of Rama. When you grow older, you will read this great poem yourself.

In the kingdom of Ayodhya there lived a king called Dasharatha. His eldest son was Rama. All the people loved him and wanted him to be king after his father. But he had a step-mother, Kaikeyi. She was jealous of Rama, because she wanted the throne for her own son Bharata. So she made the king send Rama away to the forest for fourteen years. Rama willingly left the palace to obey his father's command. With him went his loving wife, Sita, and his brother, Lakshmana. Their going upset Dasharatha so much that he died of grief. Bharata too loved Rama so much that he refused to sit on the throne his mother had got for him.

In the forest, Rama, Sita and Lakshmana had to lead a very hard life. They could not have any of the comforts of the palace. But none of them felt sorry. They enjoyed living close to trees, rivers and animals. Rama and Lakshmana fought many rakshasas or demons in the forest.

Surpanakha, sister of the demon-king Ravana of Lanka, saw Lakshmana and liked him so much that she wanted him to marry her. Lakshmana refused. She would not leave him. Lakshmana was so angry that he cut off

Rama went after the deer

her nose. Ravana was mad with rage on hearing this, and thought of a plan to take revenge. He sent his uncle, Mareecha, to Rama's hut, disguised as a golden deer. Sita was so charmed by the deer that she asked Rama to capture it for her. Rama went after the deer, telling Lakshmana to stay and guard Sita. Then by some magic, Lakshmana heard Rama calling for help. He did not know whether he should go to help his brother or stay and guard Sita as he had been ordered to do. At last he went. Mareecha had tricked Lakshmana by imitating Rama's voice. This was the chance Ravana had been waiting for. He disguised himself as a sannyasi and came to Sita's hut. he seized her and carried her off to the island of Lanka.

Rama returned to the hut empty-handed because there had been no real deer. When he found Sita gone, he was heart-broken. He set out at once in search of her. And, as before, his devoted brother Lakshmana went with him.

The two brave brothers were helped by Sugriva, the king of the monkeys, and his minister Hanuman. The army of monkeys hurled rocks and

mountains into the sea to build a bridge so that Rama could cross over into Lanka. There Rama fought Ravana and killed him. Sita was rescued. The fourteen years of Rama's banishment were now over. He retunred to Ayodhya with Sita, Lakshmana and Hanuman. The people of Ayodhya were overjoyed to see their beloved Rama again. Bharata had kept the throne for him during all the fourteen years. Rama was now crowned king. His reign was so just and good that people even today speak of Ramarajya as the ideal of Government.

The Mahabharata

The Mahabharata is another great book of ancient India. It is the story of the sons of Bharat (not Rama's brother Bharata), who was a great king of the Aryans. India is called Bharatavarsha or the land of Bharat after this famous king.

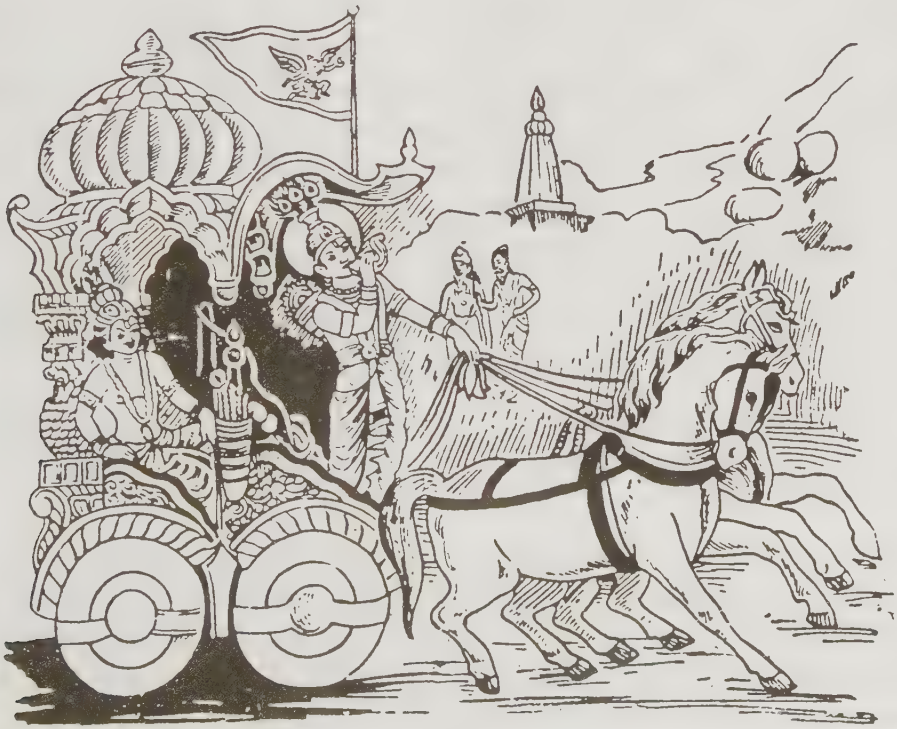
A descendant of Bharat called Dhritarashtra ruled in Hastinapur on the banks of the Ganga. He was blind and old. He had a hundred sons, who were called the Kauravas. He also had five nehpews, the Pandavas, whom he loved like his own children. Yudhishthira was the eldest of the Pandavas. Bhima, the second Pandava, was so strong that he could uproot trees and use them in battle. There was no limit to the amount he could eat. It is said that he once ate up seven cartloads of rice! He was also a great cook. The next brother was the brave Arjuna, whose skill in archery was famed throughout the land. Nakula and Sahadeva were the youngest. The eldest Kaurava, Duryodhana, was jealous of his five cousins. He made many attempts to kill them. So the Pandavas left home to make their own fortunes.

During their wandering, the Pandavas came to the kingdom of Panchala. Here, the lovely princess Draupadi was to marry the man who proved himself the best shot with a bow and arrow. The Pandavas attended the archery contest along with hundreds of other kings and princes. No one could match the skill of Arjuna and he won the hand of Draupadi. When the Pandavas brought her home, they called out to their mother Kunti, "Arjuna has won a wonderful prize!" "Share it like good brothers," replied Kunti, not knowing what the prize was. And so Draupadi became the wife of all the five brothers.

The Pandavas returned home to Hastinapur. Their uncle felt sorry that

they had wandered homeless so long. He gave them half his kingdom. Duryodhana had never liked the Pandavas and was unhappy that his father had given them a share of the kingdom. He thought of a plan to ruin the Pandavas. He challenged Yudhishthira to a game of dice. In those days a king could not refuse such a challenge. Yudhishthira lost everything. When he had lost even his kingdom he staked himself and his brothers. Luck was against him, and he lost once again. Now all he had left was Draupadi. He staked her and lost her as well. The Kauravas were very pleased. One of them dragged her by her hair into the court. Poor Draupadi could do nothing but pray. The Lord Krishna heard her prayers, and saved her from disgrace.

Duryodhana's father, Dhritarashtra, was sorry for what had happened to the Pandavas, and gave them back their kingdom. But Duryodhana called Yudhishthira to yet another game of dice. The stake this time was that the losers should go away to the forest for twelve years and spend one more year in hiding without being found out. The Pandavas lost the game. They kept their word and went away to the forest with Draupadi.



Krishna, who drove Arjuna's chariot, gave him strength and wisdom

At the end of the thirteen years, Duryodhana refused to give the kingdom back to them. Instead, he collected a huge army from the farthest corners of the land and declared war on the Pandavas. A large part of the Mahabharata describes this great battle which took place at Kurukshetra and raged for eighteen days. Many great heroes fought on each side. Although the army of the Pandavas was much smaller than that of the Kauravas, they won the great battle. This was because they were in the right and they had the blessing of Krishna. In the end all the Kauravas were killed and Yudhishthira became king of Hastinapur.

After many years of rule the five Pandavas gave up their kingdom and set out in search of heaven. Draupadi was with them, as she had always been. Yudhishthira also took with him a faithful dog. His brothers and Draupadi died on the way one by one and Yudhishthira reached the gates of heaven alone, with only his dog. There he was told that he would have to leave the dog behind if he wanted to enter heaven. Yudhishthira refused. The gods were impressed by his devotion, and gladly let them both enter heaven.

The Mahabharata is the longest poem in the world. In it there are hundreds of tales about heroes and gods, wise men and brave women. The most important part of the Mahabharata is the Bhagavad Gita or the Divine Song. It tells of the time when Arjuna stood with his armies on the battlefield of Kurukshetra and was full of doubt and sorrow. He saw that those he had once loved were ranged opposite him, ready to fight. How could he lift his bow against the cousins with whom he had grown up and the elders whom he loved and respected? Krishna, who drove his chariot, gave him strength and wisdom and told him that the most important thing was to do one's duty without thinking of the results. A man could best do his duty if he conquered selfishness and desire. This is the important message of the Gita.

All Hindus greatly respect the teachings of the Gita and try to follow them. The Gita is also read and respected by many men all over the world who are not Hindus.

Who wrote these great books of the Aryans? Valmiki wrote the Ramayana and Vyasa wrote The Mahabharata. At first they were written in Sanskrit. But both the stories became so popular all over the country that they were in course of time translated into languges that the common people could understand. As time went on, more stories were added to them. The heroes and heroines of these poems became very dear to the people.

Wherever you go in India, you will meet children called Rama and Sita, Krishna and Kunti. The Ramayana and the Mahabharata are our epics, our great national stories. You have all probably heard them from your grandmothers. The stories of the The Ramayana and the Mahabharata have been told again and again in all our languages and in each new age. They are part of our lives. That is why most people in this country, whether they belong to the south or the north, the east or the west, still speak of the goodness of Rama, the faithfulness of Sita, the bravery of Arjuna and the devotion of Draupadi.

GAUTAMA BUDDHA AND MAHAVIRA

You must have seen statues of Buddha and pictures of Buddhist shrines. Millions of people in the world worship Buddha and try to live their lives according to what he taught. Even those who are not Buddhists think of him as one of the greatest men the world has known.

He was born at Lumbini more than 2,500 years ago. Lumbini is a small place near the border between India and Nepal. A tall pillar now stands there. It was put up 250 years after Buddha's death by a great king of India to mark the spot where he was born.

He was named Gautama. His father was the ruler of a tribe known as the Shakyas. He lived in a fine palace and could have everything he wanted. He had the most wonderful toys, the best things to eat and the most beautiful clothes. But as he grew older, he grew less and less fond of these things. What he liked most was to be alone so that he could think or play with animals all by himself.

When this thoughtful child grew up, he was married to a beautiful princess called Yashodhara. They had a lovely son whom they called Rahula. Still, Gautama was not happy. He went on thinking about the world outside the palace gates, about the common people and their lives. One day he saw an old man. Then he saw a sick man, whose back was so bent that he could hardly walk. Gautama could not understand why men had to grow old and suffer. And once when he was driving through the city, he saw men carrying a dead body. This upset him very much. He asked himself why men had to die. He had never seen such sights inside the palace, and did not know there was so much unhappiness in the world. As he was about to drive back to the palace, he saw a man in yellow robes, carrying a begging bowl. On asking who he was, Gautama was told that he was a mendicant who had given up the world to escape from the misery of life. Gautama's mind became very troubled. He decided that he would not rest until he had found out why there was sorrow in the world, and how men could be free of it.

Buddha spoke to the people in simple words which they understood

One night he got up when everyone in the palace was fast asleep. He walked softly so as not to wake up Yashodhara and little Rahula. For one moment he stood looking at them. What he was going to do was not easy, but it had to be done. As long as he stayed among the people he loved, enjoying the good things of the palace, he would never find an answer to the questions that troubled him. And after one long, last look, he left the palace for ever.

Gautama threw away his princely robes, cut off his hair, and set out on his search. He went to a number of wise people but they could not tell him why there was unhappiness in the world. He sat down to think it out for himself and did not eat or drink for many days. His body became all bones, but he still did not know the answer. He wandered for six years without any result. And then, one day, when he was sitting under a big tree, the answers suddenly came to him. All his doubts left him. He felt as if he knew all the secrets of the world. Buddha is one who has got bodhi (or buddhi) which means knowledge. Now that he had Knowledge, Gautama became Buddha. There is a very large temple in Gaya called the Mahabodhi temple. This is the place where Gautama became Buddha. The tree under which he was sitting at the time is called the Bodhi tree.

Buddha discovered that there was sorrow and unhappiness in the world. He also discovered the reason for this sorrow. It was because people were greedy and selfish and wanted things. And the only way to end unhappiness was not to go on wanting things but to follow what he called the Eightfold Path. Some of the principles included in the Eightfold Path were right action, right speech and right thinking. There were five more. When you are older, you can learn more about these.

Another important thing Buddha discovered from his own life was that too much of pleasure and comfort did not lead to happiness. Nor did living in forests without food or shelter and torturing one's body bring happiness. The right way of living was the Middle Path, between these two extremes.

The teachings of Buddha have been collected and written down in many books. One is called the Dhammapada. Here are some of the sayings of Buddha.

> If you have done something sinful, do not do it again; for evil things will only give you pain. If you have done something good, do it again and again; for good deeds bring joy and delight.
>
> The greatest of all conquerors is not he who conquers a thousand men a thousand times in battle, but he who conquers his own self.

Buddha taught that all men should learn to control themselves. If someone was angry, one should not be angry in return, but be kind instead. If someone did a bad thing one should try to do good in return. One should not kill or hurt anybody, not even animals. One should tell the truth, keep one's thoughts pure and show loving kindness to all.

All his life Buddha went from place to place, teaching people the truths he had found. Even when he was tired of walking, he did not stop long to rest; so great was his love for human beings. Slowly his fame spread. More and more people came to him and begged to be taught. One day Buddha returned to his old palace, but only to give his teaching to his family. Yashodhara and Rahula, who was now a grown-up boy, became his followers.

When Buddha was eighty years old, he fell very ill. His followers became sad, because they were afraid he might die. Buddha comforted them and told them not to grieve, because everything that is born must die. And then he passed away.

Buddha's life and teaching brought about great changes in the country. At the time he was born, the rules of the caste system had become very strict. Poor people who worked with their hands had lost the right to read the holy books. Prayer was no longer simple and joyful as it had been for the early Aryans. It was just a heap of difficult words and ceremonies which only Brahmins could understand. Buddha was not himself a Brahmin. He was a Kshatriya whose real job was supposed to be fighting. And yet he taught the people about religion. Buddha did not see any difference between the castes. Whether a person was good or not depended on how he behaved. Buddha said that in his religion, all castes met as rivers run into the sea. He loved all men, whether they were kings or shoe-makers, Brahmins or Shudras. Many times he refused invitations to the houses of rich people of high caste in order to visit the poor or those who needed him more.

Buddha spoke to the people in simple words which they understood. The lower castes did not feel left out just because they did not know Sanskrit. Buddha's new way made all men feel that they were equal.

A scholar has called Buddha the Light of Asia. It is right to call him that because light is something that makes you see your way in the darkness. Buddha tried to lead the people through the darkness of ignorance to the right path.

Mahavira

About the same time as the Buddha, there was another great man who had the courage to try and change the old ways. His name was Vardhamana

Mahavira. Mahavira belonged to a royal family to Vaisali. His life was like Buddha's in many ways. He too was a Kshatriya; he left his home when he was a young man and went from one place to another in search of knowledge. After twelve years, he found what he was looking for. Then he travelled widely, giving his teaching to everyone. He became a great saint of the Jains. The Jain religion teaches ahimsa, or non-violence, which means that no living thing should be hurt. The Jains live very strict and simple lives. They believe that not only birds and animals have life, but also plants and tiny creatures of the air which we cannot even see. And they treat all life with respect.

THE EMPIRE OF THE MAURYAS

At the time of Buddha, India was made up of a number of small kingdoms. Every king wanted to become the greatest of all. It was difficult for all these kings to live together in a friendly way. For a long time there was no one who was strong enough to rule over all the kingdoms together. One of the earliest of the great kings of India was Chandragupta Maurya. Before he became an emperor a very important thing happened.

Porus and Alexander

A young boy in far-off Greece used to dream of conquering the whole world. His name was Alexander. When Alexander became a young man, the dream of his childhood very nearly came true. He left his country with an army of 40,000 men, and started moving towards India. He defeated every king he met on the way. At last, strong and proud after many victories, Alexander boldly crossed the Hindukush mountains. Many chiefs of small Indian kingdoms in the Punjab tried to stop him, but he was too powerful for them. One of the kings who fought bravely against Alexander was Porus. The army of Porus had camped on the banks of the river Jhelum. It had many war-chariots and elephants. Alexander's army was on the other side of the Jhelum. One night, when it was raining some of Alexander's soldiers crossed the river and attacked the camp of Porus. The elephants got frightened and started to run back. They killed many of their own soldiers and caused a panic. The chariots got stuck in the mud. At last Porus had to surrender and was brought to the Greek camp as a prisoner in chains. Alexander asked him, "How shall I treat you?" "Like a king", answered the proud Porus. Alexander liked the spirit and courage of Porus and let him have his kingdom back.

At this time there was a rich kingdom called Magadha. Magadha is the old name for the southern part of Bihar. Alexander had heard of it and

wanted to conquer it. He crossed three more rivers of the Punjab and came up to the banks of the Beas. Then his soldiers refused to go any further because they were tired and wanted to return home. Alexander had to give in and go back with them. He returned to the Indus, collected many boats and sailed down the river to the sea.

Chandragupta Maurya

There was a fearless young Indian who had been watching the exploits of Alexander very closely. This was because he himself wanted to become a conqueror like him some day. This young man was Chandragupta Maurya.

Chandragupta had once been a general in the army of the king of Magadha. He plotted to become king himself but failed. His life was in danger, and he had to run away from Megadha. He wandered in the Punjab waiting for his chance. With him was a very clever man called Chanakya. Chanakya had also lived at the court of the king of Magadha. He left the court because the king had insulted him. Now he wanted to take revenge. The best way to take away the crown and give it to someone else. Chandragupta was just the kind of person he was looking for. Chanakya taught Chandragupta how to become a powerful king.

Chandragupta began to collect an army. When he was strong enough he won for himself all the kingdoms that Alexander had taken in India. Then he marched to Magadha and defeated the king. Both he and Chanakya had been waiting a long time for this. Chandragupta was then crowned king of Magadha and began to rule all the lands he had conquered.

After some time Seleukus, one of the generals of Alexander, tried to win back the kingdoms that had been lost. But Chandragupta defeated him. When there was peace between them, Chandragupta married the daughter of Seleukus. Afterwards Seleukus sent an ambassador called Megasthenes to Chandragupta's capital at Pataliputra, where Patna is today. Megasthenes wrote a book describing all he saw.

Chandragupta's kingdom grew larger and larger, until it became a huge empire, the biggest single empire India had known so far.

Chandragupta ruled his land very well. Chanakya, his clever teacher, became his chief minister and helped him in keeping the country in good

order. He wrote a book which tells how a king should rule. This book is known as the Artha-shastra.

Chandragupta lived in a wonderful palace all made of wood. It was decorated with gold and silver. The ponds in the gardens were full of many kinds of fish. Now nothing remains of this palace.

Chandragupta also built a wide and a very, very long road. It ran from Purushpura, which is now called Peshawar, right up to Pataliputra—over 1,900 kilometres. There were shady trees on either side. Every few kilometres there were rest-houses where tired travellers could stay.

Ashoka

Chandragupta had a grandson named Ashoka. Ashoka grew up to be a very wise and good king. Many people believe that he was the best king India ever had.

When Ashoka came to the throne, almost the whole of the country was under him. Only the kingdom of Kalinga, which was ruled by powerful tribes, was independent. Kalinga was roughly where Orissa is today. Ashoka thought that, like his grandfather, he ought to make his empire bigger and stronger. So he invaded Kalinga with a mighty army. The people of Kalinga came out in all their force. Their army had 700 elephants. There was a terrible battle. In the end, Ashoka won. But his victory did not make him happy. He was a very kind man. He saw that thousands of people had been killed and many more wounded. Ashoka was so upset by all this that he vowed never to take out his sword again. Nor would the drums of war ever be beaten in the land that he ruled over.

After the battle of Kalinga, Ashoka became a follower of Buddha. Kings in those days enjoyed hunting. Ashoka gave it up because Buddha had said one must not kill or hurt anybody. He also gave up eating meat and tried to stop the killing of animals.

Ashoka lived a pure and good life himself; he also wanted his people to live good lives. His empire was so large that he could not speak to all his people himself. So he thought of a wonderful plan. He got stone-workers to carve what he wanted to say on pillars of stone. The writing was in the language which the people spoke. These pillars were taken to every corner of the country and put up for everyone to see.

What did these writings (or edicts as they are called) say? They asked the people to be kind, to tell the truth and not to kill. These were the lessons of Buddha. The pillars also tell us some things about the greatness of Ashoka and what he did for his subjects whom he loved as though they were his own children.

Ashoka's voice is still heard because he wrote his message on rocks and stone pillars and made them speak for him over the centuries to this day. He was the first king to use stone for building.

He sent good and learned men to other countries to spread the teachings of Buddha. In those days travelling was not easy. Countries which today are like next-door neighbours, because of ships and aeroplanes, seemed very very far. He spent a great deal of money on his missions to foreign lands.

The lions on the pillar at Sarnath (Varanasi). They now form the seal of our Government

Ashoka visited all the holy places of the Buddhists—Lumbini, where Buddha was; Gaya, where he attained Enlightenment; Kushinagara, where he passed away; and many others besides. He put up a pillar to mark the place where Buddha was born. He built many viharas, or places where Buddhist holy men could live. In fact he built so many that Magadha came to be known as the country of Viharas or Bihar. He also built monasteries where men could live and learn about the teachings of Buddha.

One of Ashoka's pillars carries the figures of four lions sitting back to back. This pillar is at Sarnath. Another emblem often carved on the rocks and pillars is a wheel. The wheel stands for the Law that Buddha taught. Today you will find this wheel in the middle of our national flag. The lions on the pillars form the seal of our Government.

ASHOKA'S EMPIRE
KASHMIR
SRINAGARA
GANDHARA
TAKSASILA
HIMALAYA MOUNTAINS
Brahmaputra
Lumbini
Sindhu
KUSINAGARA
Ganga
Yamuna
SARANATH
PATALIPUTRA
BODHGAYA
MALWA
MAGADHA
VINDHYA MOUNTAINS
Narmada
Godavari
MAHARASHTRA
ANDHRAS
KALINGA
Kaveri
CHOLAS
PANDYAS

AFTER ASHOKA

If you have ever gathered a bunch of flowers, you will know that to keep them together you have to hold them tightly. If you loosen your hold, the first jerk or gust of wind will scatter them all over the place. Emperor Ashoka was like the man who held the bunch of flowers firmly in his hand, the flowers of course being the many, many small kingdoms into which India was divided up before his grandfather became an emperor. When Ashoka died, the country started to fall apart. The first part of the empire that broke away was Kalinga for which Ashoka had fought a mighty battle. Many others followed until India again began to look like a jigsaw puzzle made up of many pieces.

Menander

The people of the north-west had their eyes on the rich land of the Indus. Now that there was no one strong enough to protect it, they decided to build kingdoms for themselves. There were many Greeks who had come with Alexander. They had been living in a country called Bactria ever since. When they saw their chance, they came into the Punjab and conquered it. They ruled it for a hundred years. One of their kings was called Menander. Menander was wise and brave. He treated his subjects kindly. He liked some of the ways of the Indians so much that he almost became an Indian. One important way in which he did this was by becoming a follower of Buddha. He loved to have long talks with learned men so that he could become more and more wise.

India also learnt something from the Greeks. The Greeks were famous for making statues. The Buddhists were also good sculptors. They started to make statues in the same style as the Greeks. This style of sculpture is known as the Gandhara. Gandhara is the name of the place where these Greek kings ruled. Its modern name is Kandahar and it is in Afghanistan. There are many beautiful statues of Buddha in the Gandhara style.

The Greeks had forced their way into India. Now more people began to do the same thing. A sturdy race from Central Asia called Shakas came first. They were followed by another called Pahalavas who came from Persia. Then came more tribes from the western borders of China. This happened about the time that Christ was born.

Kanishka

One of the tribes that came to India was called Kushan. The Kushans soon became stronger than the others. They had a very barve chief whose name was Kanishka. He won many battles until his empire became very large and extended from Peshawar, which was his capital, right up to Patna in the east, covering the Punjab, Kashmir, Sindh and Gujarat. Large parts of Central Asia, which had been the home of the Kushans, were also under Kanishka.

One day, a very wise Buddhist scholar called Ashvaghosha came to see the king and told him the good things Buddha had taught. Kanishka became a follower of Buddha and tried to spread Buddha's teaching over the lands he ruled. During Kanishka's time many temples were built and many statues of Buddha were made. A large number of centres were set up where learned men could study and teach.

The Kushans ruled for about 300 years. Then their power faded.

SOUTHERN KINGDOMS

The three earliest kingdoms of the South were the Pandya, the Chola, and the Chera. These lasted for hundreds of years. The Pandya kingdom was so famous that even Megasthenes, who came to the court of Chandragupta Maurya from far-off Greece, had heard many stories of the great army of the Pandyas. The Chera kings sent their ships to many countries of West Asia with spices and pearls. The ships returned with much gold and wealth. There were many rich merchants in the Chera kingdom. About the Cholas you will read more later.

The Satavahanas

Some years after the Maurya empire had broken up, there arose a king in the Andhra country. He was the first of a long line of kings called the Satavahanas. The Satavahana kings became stronger and stronger until their empire stretched across the middle of the country, from the Arabian Sea to the Bay of Bengal. They ruled for more than 300 years and did a lot to bring the different ways of the north and the south closer together.

In the empire of the Satavahanas, there were both Hindus and Buddhists. You may have seen pictures of the beautiful buildings and statues at Amaravati and Nagarjunakonda in Andhra. These were built long ago by the Satavahana kings. These kings had huge rocks cut into caves and built lovely temples inside. Work on the famous Ajanta caves first started at the time of the Satavahana kings. Afterwards other rulers added new paintings and statues to them.

The Satavahana kings traded with other countries. All goods meant for foreign countries were collected at Kalyan, near the present Bombay, to be shipped. The merchants became so rich that some of them had huge cave temples built at their own expense.

THE GOLDEN AGE OF THE GUPTAS

There lived in Magadha a young man called Chandragupta. You may remember that this was also the name of Ashoka's grandfather, who had ruled Magadha five hundred years earlier. Young Chandragupta was not satisfied with just the name of a great king. He also wanted an empire as big as that of Chandragupta Maurya.

Chandragupta married a princess called Kumaradevi who came from a very rich and powerful family and owned vast lands. Chandragupta added to his wife's possessions and built up a small kingdom. This small kingdom later grew into a very large and wonderful empire. Chandragupta started a line of kings who ruled so well that their times are called the golden age of India.

Samudragupta used to play the veena very well

Samudragupta

Chandragupta's son, Samudragupta, was a great soldier. When he became king, he led his armies on long military adventures. First he marched west from his capital up to the river Chambal. Then he went eastwards as far as Kalinga; then southwards, through the thick forests of Central India, to Kanchipuram and Malabar. Altogether, he led his armies for over 4,800 kilometres and not once was he defeated. He returned home with plenty of gold and riches. He used the gold to make coins and the riches for the good of his people.

In ancient India, the kings used to have an interesting custom. When they thought that they had conquered the whole land, they used to let loose a white horse. The horse would roam wherever it liked, followed by the king's soldiers. If anybody tried to capture it, he would have to fight the king's army. If the horse returned home without being captured, it meant that the power of the king was recognized by everyone in the land. The horse was then offered as sacrifice. The ceremony was called the Ashvamedha Yajna. Samudragupta sent out such a horse and no one dared to stop it. So he proclaimed himself emperor.

Samudragupta had made his empire very big. The Kushans and Shakas, who had been such good fighters, were afraid of him. But Samudragupta was not just a good soldier. He was a learned man and liked scholars. He liked beautiful paintings and statues. He loved music and used to play the veena very well. He also wrote poetry.

Chandragupta Vikramaditya

The greatest of the Gupta kings was Samudragupta's son. His name was also Chandragupta. Later on he gave himself another name—Vikramaditya, which means the Sun of Valour. This name turned out to be just right for him, because he made his father's empire even greater and stronger than it was. He conquered the lands to the west. This gave him control over the sea-ports on the western coast. From these ports, ships took rubies, fine cloth and spices which were sold in Egypt, Rome and other countries. This trade brought great wealth to India.

Fa-Hian

Many hundred years before, Ashoka had sent messengers to far-off countries to spread the teaching of Buddha. In China, millions of people had become Buddhists. One of them was named Fa-Hian. He came to India during the reign of the Vikramaditya and has written about what he saw. Wherever he went, he found the people happy. They had all they needed and were kind to one another. They had very good manners and spoke politely. In Magadha there were rest-houses where people could eat and rest. There were hospitals where they were looked after when they were ill without having to pay anything. There were also hospitals for animals and very few people killed them for food.

At the court of Vikramaditya, musicians, poets, painters, and writers were very welcome. The king chose nine of the best, and called them his nine gems. Some people believe that the great poet Kalidasa, who wrote many famous plays in Sanskrit, was one of them. The most famous of Kalidasa's plays is Shakuntala. Raghuvamsa and Meghadoot are two of his famous poems. But it is still not known definitely when Kalidasa really lived.

The poets of the Gupta age wrote Sanskrit more beautifully than it had ever been written before. The Gupta kings helped Sanskrit writers and had holy books like the Puranas written down. Many lovely statues and buildings were made at this time. It was a good age for artists to be born in, for the kings were great patrons of art. We have already read about Ajanta caves. Some of the more famous paintings of Ajanta belong to the Gupta age.

There were many Gupta kings after Vikramaditya. Altogether they ruled for 160 years. But no good thing lasts for ever. After the Guptas something dreadful happened in our country. This was the coming of the Huns.

THE HUNS

The Huns were a fierce tribe who lived in Central Asia and wandered from place to place with their herds of cattle. When they got tired of their dry lands and mountains, they set out in search of new pastures. Some went to Europe, and some came towards India. They were like robbers looking for a rich house to loot.

The Huns were very good horsemen. They could stay in the saddle for many days and even sleep on horseback. They lived in tents made of skins, ate uncooked meat and drank sour milk. They were very good marksmen and could shoot an arrow or throw a lance without missing.

The Huns came in thousands, galloping on their sturdy little horses. The rode over the Punjab, Rajasthan and Kathiawar and went as far east as Bihar. Wherever they went, they burned houses, killed people and took everything on which they could lay hands. People trembled with fear at their very name. They would pitch their black tents for a night or so at the place they raided. The next day, they were again on their way to kill and burn and rob.

King Skandagupta, who was ruling at this time, defeated the Huns once. But after he died, there was no one to stop them. Toramana, their leader, got himself a golden throne and fine silk robes. He began to call himself king. His capital was called Shakala, the old name for Sialkot which is now in Pakistan. The people obeyed Toramana because they were afraid of him, but secretly they hated him.

For seventy years there was great cruelty and terror in the country. Toramana's son, Mihiragula, was ever more cruel than his father.

The Huns built an empire of their own. But it did not last long because the people were unhappy and hated the Huns. They were finally defeated by Yashodharman, a brave king from Central India. After many long years they became a part of the people of India and took to peaceful ways.

HARSHAVARDHANA OF KANAUJ

Would you give away everything you had to someone who needed it more than you? If you would, you are like one of the geatest kings that ever ruled in India. The name of this king was Harshavardhana.

Harsha was the prince of Thanesar. He was brave and kind and everyone loved him. His sister, Rajyashri, was married to the king of Kanauj. When Harsha was sixteen years old, Rajyashri's husband was killed and she was put in prison by a rival king. The young Harsha defeated this king and saved his sister. When the ministers of Kanauj saw the courage of this young prince, they asked him to become the king of Kanauj. So the kingdoms of Thanesar and Kanauj became one and Harsha was crowned king.

The first thing Harsha did was to conquer more land. For six years his soldiers did not take off their belts. They had no time for rest. The elephants of Harsha's army always remained in harness. He won many battles, and soon his empire stretched from the Punjab to Bengal. It was almost as big as the empire of Chandragupta Vikramaditya had been. Harsha wanted to make it even bigger. So he tried to conquer the south. But there was a powerful king called Pulakesin in the Deccan who did not even let Harsha cross the river Narmada.

A poet called Bana lived at the king's court. Bana admired Harsha and wrote a book about him. The book is in Sanskrit and is called Harshacharita. When you learn Sanskrit you can read for yourself how just and wise Bana thought king Harsha to be. Bana's other well-known book is Kadambari, a novel.

Yuan Chwang

There is another person who has told us about the times of Harsha. He is Yuan Chwang, a traveller who came from far-off China. Like Fa-Hian, he

also came to look for books about Buddhism, and to see holy places. In those days India was famous for her learning and her wise men. Yuan Chwang was also a very learned man. He came by land across the mountains all the way from China. Many times he lost his way in the desert. Many times he and his horse became so thirsty that he could not move another step. But Yuan Chwang did not give up. He faced all the hardships and dangers to come to the land of Buddha.

Yuan Chwang started out to meet Harsha

When Yuan Chwang came, Harsha was away from his capital travelling with his ministers and courtiers. When he heard that Yuan Chwang had arrived at Kanauj, Harsha asked him to come to his camp at once. Yuan Chwang started out to meet the king. He travelled for many days. As he neared Harsha's camp, it got dark. So he pitched his tent on the other side of the river for the night, thinking that he would meet the great king the next morning. But in the middle of the night drums began to beat and the dark river was lit up with thousands of torches. Yuan Chwang woke up in alarm. He soon found out that the king and his courtiers were crossing the river. Harsha was so eager to meet the learned man from China that he could not wait until the morning. They were both delighted to see each other. Afterwards, Harsha and his sister Rajyashri had many talks with Yuan Chwang and both became followers of Buddha.

The great king returned to Kanauj and took Yuan Chwang with him in a grand procession. Drums and trumpets sounded all the way. There were many elephants. On one elephant was a beautiful statue of Buddha made of gold. The king scattered golden flowers, pearls and perfumes. Thousands of his subjects, dressed in bright uniforms, followed him on foot. Many came by river in boats. When they reached Kanauj, a very large crowd of citizens, including princes, nobles and holy men, welcomed them. Yuan Chwang spoke to them. Many of them became Buddhists.

Harsha, who had become a follower of Buddha, continued to pray to Shiva, and the sun, like other Hindus. He respected both religions. He was a very kind-hearted king. Every five years he went to Prayag and gave away everything he had, his money, clothes and jewels, to the poor. He did this six times in his life. It is said that once he had to borrow an old garment from his sister as he had nothing left to wear!

Harsha ordered that animals were not to be killed. The royal kitchens used to feed a thousand Buddhists and five hundred Brahmins every day. All over the kingdom there were rest-houses. No one needed to be without food or clothes. In everything Harsha followed in the foot-steps of the great kings who had ruled before him, Ashoka and the Gupta emperors. Harsha also loved books, music and painting. He himself was a poet and wrote a number of plays.

Many of these things are told to us by Yuan Chwang who wrote down almost everything he saw and heard. Yuan Chwang also tells us of his visit to Nalanda in Bihar. Here there was a great Buddhist university to which students from distant lands came to study. Thousands of priests and learned men lived and taught here. The students and teachers of Nalanda university were very happy to welcome Yuan Chwang.

After fifteen years of travelling. Yuan Chwang felt it was time to return to China. Harsha was sorry to see him go, and offered him many gifts. Yuan Chwang refused everything, except a fur coat. He knew it would be very cold on the way back. Harsha also gave him an elephant to ride on, and horses to carry the books, pictures and statues he was taking back with him. When Yuan Chwang left, Harsha was so sad that he galloped after him to say good-bye once more.

PALLAVAS AND CHALUKYAS

When Harshavardhana was ruling the north, the Pallavas were at the height of their power in the far south. The Pallavas were at first viceroys of the Satavahanas, about whom we have read. They later set up a kingdom of their own which lasted for nearly 300 years. They had a very fine university at Kanchipuram. Scholars from all over the country came to study Sanskrit at this famous place and Kanchi became the most important city of the south.

Mahabalipuram near Madras is a city of ancient temples. Huge animals have been carved out of single big pieces of stone. Big rocks have been cut and shaped into beautiful shrines. All this is the work of the Pallavas. Yuan Chwang also visited Mahabalipuram. He was greatly impressed by the skill of Pallava temple builders.

At Mahabalipuram, huge animals have been carved out of single big pieces of stone

At this time, there was another power as great as the Pallavas. This was the Chalukya kingdom of the Godavari valley. The Chalukyas and the Pallavas were rivals for nearly 200 years, and both remained equally strong. Like the Pallavas, the Chalukyas had a very good navy and their merchant

ships traded with many foreign countries. The people of Malaya and Indonesia treated the sailors from India in a very friendly way.

As you know, Harsha once tried to conquer the south. Even he, with his riches and his great army, was defeated. Pulakesin, the king who made him return home, belonged to the great Chalukya dynasty.

ACROSS LAND AND SEA

In the Indian Ocean there is a little island called Bali. It is now part of Indonesia. It will surprise you to know that the people of Bali act and dance the Ramayana just as we do in India. Many of their old festivals and customs are like ours. How did this happen?

Long ago, the people of the southern part of India had very good sailing ships. In these ships, they sent out spices, cotton cloth, pearls, diamonds, and even peacocks, to countries of the West. Their ships also sailed to the eastern countries. Once, an Indian prince went to Java with 5,000 men in six large ships. These men did not return to India, but made Java their home. The people of Java learnt many things from them. They learnt their religion, their language, even the way they built temples. Gradually Java became like a great Indian island in the middle of the ocean.

Many other countries took to the ways of India. They found many good and beautiful things in the culture of India. In Cambodia, Thailand and Malaysia, we still find old rocks with Sanskrit writing on them. It you saw some of the Hindu and Buddhist temples in these countries, and the statues in them, you would almost believe you were looking at an ancient Indian temple.

Nearly two thousand years ago, the Romans had a special kind of gold coin and a special kind of pottery. These have been found in many places in South India. How did these coins come to India? They must have come from Rome in exchange for something that went from India. India also traded with Iraq, Egypt and other countries of the Mediterranean Sea, and these countries in turn traded with Rome. There were great ports all along the coast of India from Gujarat to Bengal. Old stories tell of sailors from strange lands who walked about in Indian ports, and of warehouses full of rare things unloaded by foreign ships.

To sail all these seas, our people must have had very good ships. More important than even the ships, our sailors must have been brave men, full of the spirit of adventure.

The sea was not India's only link with the world outside. You will remember that the great king Ashoka sent holy men with Buddha's message to countries across the north-west frontier—Afghanistan, Bactria and many others. It is said that his own son and daughter went to Ceylon for the same work. The Chinese travellers who came to India took back with them many things that were Indian. Indian scholars also went to China. Many Indians went by difficult land routes to Tibet and to the countries of Central Asia.

And so the fame of India spread to all the important countries that were then known.

SHANKARA THE GREAT TEACHER

About a hundred years after Harsha, a remarkable man was born in Kerala. His name was Shankara. As a young boy, he was already a scholar of Sanskrit. He studied the Upanishads and other holy books of the Hindus with great interest. He used to think a great deal and ask himself many questions, such as, "What is the world?", "What is God?", "What am I?" He became a great thinker, or what grown-ups call a philosopher.

Shankara was full of energy. He set out from his home on foot to spread his teachings. In those days there were no trains or cars to take him, so he had to walk most of the time. Wherever he went, he spoke to the people about his philosophy. When they did not agree with him, he argued with them and tried to make them understand exactly what he meant. He never got tried of debating. At last the whole country, from Kanya Kumari to Himalayas, began to think and talk about what Shankara said. He wrote several great books on philosophy and also many devotional poems. Shankara's teaching helped the Hindu religion very much. Many Buddhists became Hindus. Slowly, no one could tell the difference between a Hindu and a Buddhist. Hinduism once again became the most important religion in India.

Shankara chose four places as centres for his teaching—Badrinath in the north, Shringeri in the south, Dwaraka in the west and Puri in the east. These places are important because Shankara set up, 'math' at each of them. There his pupils lived like sannyasis and studied his philosophy. They then went out and spread the teachings of Shankara in every corner of the country.

Acharya means 'teacher'. Shankara is famous today as Shankaracharya. He was one of the greatest teachers India ever had. Shankaracharya died very young. He passed away in the Himalayas at Kedarnath when he was only thirty-two years old.

HOW THE COMMON PEOPLE LIVED

You have read so far about the kings and great men of ancient India. How did the ordinary people of those days live? What did they wear or eat? What did they speak or read?

First of all, you must remember that there were far fewer people in the country then than there are now. Today we are over 846 million Indians. In this chapter we are speaking of the years between the time of Buddha and the time of Harsha. In those days, there were much, much fewer people living in India. Naturally, there were fewer villages and fewer cultivated fields. Much more of the country was covered with forest. You already know, for instance, that Sindh was a forest when Harappa and Mohenjo Daro were large towns.

After the Aryans came to our country, several large cities arose. You have already read about Ayodhya, Mithila and Hastinapur which are spoken about in our epics. You have also read about Pataliputra and Kanauj. There were many other such cities. Some of these were capitals of large kingdoms; some were holy places; yet others were sea-ports from where we carried on our trade with other countries. Tamralipti in Bengal was a famous port. So was Bhrigukachha, the modern name of which is Broach. Sopara, now a town of Maharashtra, and Kaveripatnam in the south were also famous ports. There were many holy places like Varanasi, Gaya and Prayag, to which people came from all over the country. Then there were towns which became famous because of the great universities around which they grew. Hundreds of wise and learned men lived and taught at these universities. Pupils came to them from distant lands. Some of the great university towns of ancient India were Takshashila in the north, Nalanda and Vikramashila in the east and Valabhi in the west. Later Kanchipuram in the south became a great centre of Sanskrit learning.

All the bigger towns had good roads and fine systems of water-supply and drainage.

In those times, there were no schools like the ones you go to. Boys, particularly Brahmin and Kshatriya boys, went to live in the house of some famous guru or teacher. They lived with him for about twelve years and came back to their homes only when their education was completed. These pupils lived in poverty in the guru's house, even though their parents might be rich. This was the ancient Gurukula system. Girls were mostly taught at home by their mothers, fathers, and elder brothers, although some went to learn under gurus also.

At home children heard old epics, fables and parables from their elders as children do now. Higher learning, like the study of the Vedas and Shastras, was pursued by Brahmins and certain others of higher castes while reading, writing and numbers were known even to people of the craftsman classes. Crafts were handed down from father to son. There were sixty-four branches of learning and sixty-four crafts.

What did the people of ancient India write? The script that was in use in the early days was called Brahmi. The edicts of the emperor Ashoka about which you have read earlier were in the Brahmi script. The Devanagari script in which you write Hindi and Marathi today was born out of Brahmi. So were most other scripts of the present day. Another script in use then had the strange name of Kharoshti, which means donkey's lip. But remember that in the earlier days, people did not use writing as much as they do now. Scholars mostly learnt things by heart from their teachers. They must have had very good memories, but to make it easier for them to remember, the books were written in rhyming verse. Even technical and scientific works, like books on medicine, were in verse.

It might interest you to know that there was a good deal of exchange of learning between India and other countries like Egypt and Greece. We took much of the geometry and astronomy of the Egyptians and Greeks and in return gave them our system of numbers. The principles of algebra were first developed in India. Later we also exchanged knowledge with the Arabs. One of the best known mathematicians of old India was a man called Aryabhata. We also had skilled doctors and surgeons. Charaka and Sushruta are the more famous of them. Find surgical instruments were known to the medical men of ancient India. It is said that one of these instruments was so fine that it could split a single hair into several strands.

We have read about the caste system. Just as all people were divided into four varnas or castes, it was believed that each man's life should be divided into four stages or ashramas. The first stage was brahmacharya, which had to be spent in learning. The second stage was grihastha, when man lived the life of a householder with wife and children. The third was vanaprastha, when he became a forest hermit and reflected on all he had learnt and done. The last stage was that of sannyasa when man gave up the world entirely and thought only of God.

The children of those times were not very different from children now. They drank milk, took ghee with their food and loved sweet things, like all children. Several of the foods, like the potato and tomato, were not known then. Village people lived in houses made of earth, straw and bamboo. The public buildings in the big towns were mainly of wood. The great palace of Ashoka that you have read about was made of wood and bricks. So was the famous fort of Pataliputra.

People of the upper classes often wore unstitched clothes. But in addition to the sari and the dhoti, stitched clothes like the lehnga and trousers were also in use. The women, of course, wore jewellery, some of it very different from the ornaments you see now. If you look at the paintings at Ajanta or at some ancient sculptures, you can get a good idea of the kind of the jewels they wore. Flowers were worn not only in the hair but also in the ears and around the neck.

Travelling around the country was not so easy as now, but there were many highways cutting across the country. You have heard of the famous road from Pataliputra to Peshawar. Fa-Hian, the Chinese traveller, found the roads of India very safe. He did not have to be afraid of robbers. Although travel took much longer, people were not frightened of distances when they went as pilgrims or students to the holy cities or the universities. Shankaracharya, of whom you have read, toured the country four times in his short span of life.

In India today many languages, such as Hindi, Marathi, Bengali and Telugu, are spoken. In ancient times these languages had not yet been born. The learned people spoke and wrote in Sanskrit. But ordinary people did not use Sanskrit. They used languages like Pali and Prakrit. You have read how Buddha believed that the great truths must be taught to the common people in their own language and not in scholarly Sanskrit. Most of the

Buddhist religious writings are, therefore, in Pali. Of the other languages that you find today, only Tamil has been spoken from the very early days.

The people of early times were guided in their lives by the ancient Shastras, and by the wisdom of elders. Quarrels within the family were settled by the elders, and those in the village by the panchayat. The panchayat also collected taxes and gave to the king what was his due. Trade and business were managed by councils of leading businessmen. In courts of law, decisions were taken quickly and punishment was much more severe than it is now. For example, thieves had their hands cut off and liars their tongues. If there was a theft and there was no clear clue as to the thief, the suspects were often asked to thrust their hands into flames. It was believed that the hands of the innocent would not be burnt.

Kings maintained large armies. These armies were called chaturanga bala or the fourfold force, and they consisted of elephants, horses, foot soldiers and chariots or rathas. The elephants served the same purpose that army tanks do in modern warfare. They would strike terror by rushing through the enemy lines. Then the archers could move forward in their chariots. Horsemen carried spears and lances made of bronze and iron.

You must wonder how we know all these things about so long ago. Our ancient books, like the Ramayana, the Mahabharata, and the sacred books of the Buddhists tell us a good deal about how kings and common people lived. Chanakya's book, the Arthashastra, tells us how governments were run, what were the duties of kings and subjects, and how wars were fought. The Panchatantra stories were written to train three princes in the arts that they were expected to know. Poems and plays written by authors like Bhasa, Kalidasa, Bhavabhuti, Bana and Shudraka also throw light on life in their times.

As you know, a number of visitors like Megasthenes, Fa-Hian and Yuan Chwang came to India from other countries. They left accounts of what they saw and heard. Another way in which we know about the past is by digging it up. You have known how the cities of the Indus Valley were buried under the earth and how they were dug up. From studying the ruins we can guess many things, just as you can guess, if you see footprints on the ground, that somebody must have walked that way. There are also seals, coins and inscriptions which help us guess many important things about the people who lived in India long ago.

RAJPUTS AND CHOLAS

There are many, many stories about fearless Rajput warriors and their brave queens. For these men, nothing was worse than to run away from the battlefield to save their lives. For women, it was better to die than to be disgraced.

The Rajputs first became powerful about the time Shankaracharya lived, more than a thousand years ago. Once their kingdoms extended over almost the whole of northern India. There was a powerful family of Rajput kings called Pratiharas. Their capital was at Kanauj, the old city from where Harshavardhana had once ruled his empire. The kingdom of the Pratiharas stretched from Bihar in the east right up to the sea coast in Kathiawad. In the next chapter you will read about the Arab conquest of Sindh. It was because of the Pratiharas that the Arabs could not advance any farther than they did.

There came a time when the Pratiharas lost their power in northern India. Their vast kingdom broke up and a number of small states took its place. The rulers of these states were also Rajput chiefs. Prithviraj, who is the hero of many stories, belonged to one such family called the Chauhans. It was the Chauhans who built the city of Ajmer. Another family were the Paramaras. The most famous of them was Raja Bhoj after whom the present city of Bhopal is named; it was first called Bhojpal. Raja Bhoj was learned, kind and just. Many stories are still told of his wisdom and goodness. The Chandella kings of Bundelkhand were yet another powerful ruling family. They were great builders. At a place called Khajuraho in Madhya Pradesh there are many beautiful temples built by them.

Further south ruled the Cholas. One of their greatest kings was Rajaraja. He made his kingdom very large by leading his armies into many wars. He kept a powerful navy so that his kingdom could trade with other countries by sea. His navy once conquered Ceylon. There is a very famous Shiva temple at Tanjore, which Rajaraja built. On the walls are carved stories of the many victories he won. Rajaraja's son, Rajendra Chola, was also a

famous king. He made his father's navy bigger and stronger, and sent it out across the seas to conquer parts of Burma, Malaya and Sumatra. He defeated the Pala kings of Bengal and called himself "the Chola who brought the Ganga south". He also built canals, lakes, and dams so that the farmers of his kingdom might always have water for their fields.

Chola workmen used to make beautiful images of their gods and of their kings and queens. Some of these bronze statues are carefully kept in museums today. The most famous of them is the Dancing Shiva, or Nataraja, pictures of which you may have seen.

About the same time, Bengal was ruled by a famous line of kings called the Palas. They had ships which sailed to Malaya and other countries across the seas. They built many beautiful temples and universities. After the Palas come the Sena kings. Of the Lakshman Sena was the most famous. A very fine poet called Jayadeva lived at his court. Jayadeva wrote Gita Govinda, a beautiful poem about the love of Radha and Krishna. Songs from it are still sung all over the country.

You have read how India was divided into a large number of kingdoms. All these kingdoms were jealous of each other, and kept fighting amongst themselves. This took away all their energy. And when there was an attack on the country from outside, they were too weak to stand against it.

Rajendra Chola sent his navy out across the seas

THE COMING OF ISLAM

Muhammad the Prophet

More than a thousand years ago, in the city of Mecca in Arabia, a child was born. His name was Muhammad. Muhammad's father died even before he was born. His mother passed away when he was just a baby.

Muhammad did not have much money and lived a hard life. He saw that the people who lived around him were ignorant, cruel and wild. Muhammad felt sorry for them. He wanted to help them, to tell them about God.

Muhammad felt that God had chosen him to carry His message to the people. He taught his followers not to worship stone idols but to believe that there was only one God and that he, Muhammad, was His Prophet. His followers are called Mussalmans (or Muslims) and his religion Islam. Muhammad taught the Muslims to look upon each other as brothers, to give alms to the poor and live honestly. The teachings of Islam have been collected in the Quran, which is the holy book of the Muslims.

At first, the people of Arabia did not believe what Muhammad said. In fact they were so unkind to him that he had to leave his home town, Mecca, and go to Medina. But soon they began to change their minds. Muhammad brought all the tribes of Arabia close together and so became the leader of a new nation.

Arab ships had been trading with India even before the birth of Muhammad. Many Muslim merchants later made their homes on the west coast of India. Some of them married Indian women. They tried to teach the religion of Muhammad to the people they met and many Indians became Muslims.

When the Muslims first came to southern India they came as peaceful

traders. There was no war and no bloodshed. But the story of their coming to the north was not quite so peaceful.

Muhammad Bin Qasim

Arab merchants carried back tales of the riches of India. The western coast was raided many times, but the first Muslim to lead a regular army into India was Muhammad bin Qasim. He was only seventeen years old when he started his march. He came by land along the Persian coast, with horsemen and camels and attacked Sindh. The young invader stormed the city of Multan with giant catapults, stone slings and poisoned arrows. The Hindu king surrendered, and Sindh passed into the hands of the Arabs. Muhammad bin Qasim was kind to the people he had conquered. The Arbs ruled Sindh for 300 years, but could go no further because of the powerful Rajput princes, of whom you already know something.

But after some time the kings and chiefs of India started fighting amongst themselves as you have just read. And when the country was attacked from outside, there was no king strong enough to defend it.

Mahmud of Ghazni

The most determined of the invaders was a Turk who invaded India seventeen times. His name was Mahmud and he came from Ghazni, the capital city his father had built in Afghanistan.

Mahmud's only desire was to loot India and carry as much wealth as possible back to Ghazni. The Turkish soldiers of Mahmud's army were very good horsemen and tough fighters. They swam across rivers, hacked their way through forests, waded through waist-deep snow and marched across burning deserts. They also used their bows and arrows with great skill. Mahmud defeated many Hindu kings, destroyed temples and collected vast treasures of gold and jewels. After each raid, he returned to Ghazni and used all the wealth he had brought for the glory of his own empire.

On the coast of Kathiawad, washed by the waves of the Arabian Sea, was the famous temple of Somnath. A vast treasure was stored in the temple; a thousand Brahmin priests looked after the wealth. Mahmud marched 1,100 kilometres across the desert of Sindh and Rajasthan. Many of his

soldiers died of thirst and weariness on the way. But Mahmud pushed on. He plundered the temple of all its wealth and destroyed whatever he could not take. The magnificent gates of the temple were taken off their giant hinges and carried all the way to Ghazni and set up in Mahmud's palace.

Much of the loot was used to build up a university at Ghazni. The Persian poet Firdausi and the great scholar Al-beruni were for some time at Mahmud's court.

THE SULTANATE OF DELHI

Mahmud's raids should have taught the Indian kings a lesson. But they went on fighting among themselves and the country got weaker and weaker. Then another sultan called Muhammad of Ghor attacked India.

Muhammad Ghori and Prithviraj

The armies of Prithviraj, the powerful Chauhan king of Ajmer and Delhi, advanced to meet him at Tarain. Muhammad's soldiers were fine horsemen, but the Rajputs were equally good. There was a great battle in which the Rajputs defeated the invaders. Muhammad Ghori fled back to Afghanistan, but he did not forget his defeat.

The following year, Muhammad came again with a larger army and met Prithviraj on the same battlefield. This time Prithviraj was defeated and he died fighting. Songs about his bravery are still sung by bards in Rajasthan.

Muhammad Ghori won the throne of Delhi from the Rajputs and went back to Afghanistan. He had a very clever slave called Qutbuddin Aibak whom he left in Delhi as his viceroy. Qutbuddin conquered many kingdoms for his master. Another officer, Bakhtiar Khalji, led armies into Bihar and Bengal. The Rajput ruling families had also to surrender to the newcomers. When Muhammad Ghori died, Qutbuddin Aibak became the Sultan of Delhi. He was the first independent Muslim ruler in India. For more than 600 years after him, all the kings on the throne of Delhi were followers of Islam.

The Slave Kings

After Qutbuddin, Iltutmish became king. The famous Qutb Minar at Delhi, which was started by Qutbuddin, was completed by Iltutmish. He ruled with the help of forty slaves, who were his chief officers. Because of this and because Qutbuddin had himself been a slave, the first Muslim kings of Delhi are known as the Slave dynasty.

Iltutmish had a daughter called Razia. When he became old, he thought that after him she would be able to rule much better than any of her brothers. And so, when Iltutmish died, Razia became Sultana. She was a wise and kind queen, and looked after her people well. She dressed like a man, and rode an elephant at the head of her troops. Razia was the only Muslim queen ever to sit on the throne of Delhi. Many of her generals did not like the idea of a woman ruling over them and Razia Sultana was murdered.

The famous Qutb Minar at Delhi was started by Qutbuddin

After the slave kings, four more families ruled Delhi, until Babar came and started the rule of the Mughals. These four were the Khalji, the Tughlak, the Sayyid and the Lodi dynasties.

Alauddin Khalji

Among the Khaljis the most famous king was Alauddin. He began his conquests even before he came to the throne. He led an army across the Vindhya mountains to the Deccan and won much wealth.

When he became king, he gave orders that there were to be no parties, no drinking of wine and no gambling. His officers were not allowed to meet each other. This was because Alauddin was afraid they would plot against him if they got together. He did not want his nobles to become too strong lest they should trouble the poor people.

Alauddin fought Rajput kingdoms, and extended his empire in the south. He wanted to make sure that his kingdom remained safe from invasions from outside; so he kept a strong army. But the pay of the soldiers was small. Alauddin lowered the price of food and cloth so that they might have no difficulty in buying what they needed.

One of Alauddin's generals, Malik Kafur, invaded the south. This was the first time that a Muslim army had marched into the Tamil kingdoms. Malik Kafur returned with great riches, heaps of pearls and precious stones, many horses and elephants and over 3556 tonnes of gold!

Amir Khusro

Alauddin could barely read or write, but at his court lived a great poet. This was Amir Khusro. Khusro was a great friend and disciple of the saintly Nizamuddin near whose tomb in Delhi he lies buried. Khsuro composed thousands of poems and clever *pahelis* (riddles) in Hindi. A typical *paheli* has been translated like this:

> All twenty lost their head;
> No life was lost, no blood was shed.

Can you guess the answer? It is: toe-nails and finger-nails. Khusro also wrote in Persian, and was a very fine musician, too. The modern *sitar* and the *tabla* are his inventions.

Alauddin was a fearless king and a strange mixture of good and bad. He could be very cruel, but he could also be very just. One day his Qazi told him that the bazaar of Delhi was full of dishonest shopkeepers. Alauddin was very angry that his people were being cheated. He at once appointed *daroghas* to keep a check on the bazaar, and passed laws against those who tried to make unfair profits.

Muhammad Bin Tughlak

Some years after the death of Alauddin, the crown passed to the house of Tughlaks. Muhammad bin Tughlak who belonged to this dynasty, was a learned but a most impractical man. He was full of plans and ideas, but many of his ideas only led to trouble for his people.

Once he decided to shift his capital hundreds of miles away from Delhi, so that it could be nearer the centre of the country. All men, women, and children were ordered to leave their homes and shift to the new capital, Devagiri, which was renamed Daulatabad. Some years later he ordered all of them to return because the scheme did not work out.

Another time he gave orders that copper coins should be considered equal in value to coins of gold and silver. He did this so that even the poorer people should have enough money. But what actually happened was that many people began to make their own copper coins. After some time the kingdom became very poor. Gold and silver disappeared and there were so many copper coins that they were hardly worth anything at all. When Muhammad Tughlak saw this, he cancelled his unfortunate order.

Firoz Tughlak

The next Tughlak ruler, Firoz, tried to repair the harm done by Muhammad's wild plans. He decided not to waste money on wars. Instead he built canals, bridges, tanks, schools and colleges. The happiness of the farmers was very important to him. He also loved learning and many of the ancient Sanskrit books of India were translated into Persian by his order.

The Tughlak kings who came after Firoz were weak. Their officers plotted against each other, and there were civil wars. Because of lack of unity India was again open to invasions from the north-west.

Timur the Lame

There was a fierce chief called Timur who lived in Central Asia. He was known as Timurlang because one of his legs was bad. He limped when he walked. He had heard of the riches of Hindustan. One summer he started from his capital in Samarkand. After the rainy season was over, he crossed the Indus with an army of 90,000 horsemen. It took him nearly six months to reach Delhi. He defeated the Tuglak king and his soldiers looted the city and killed many people. After spreading terror everywhere and shaking the kingdom of Delhi to its roots, he returned home.

The Tughlaks were the last Turkish sultans of Delhi. After them the throne was taken by one of Timur's governors. Two more dynasties ruled Delhi before the coming of the Mughals. But the kingdom which they ruled was much smaller than that of Alauddin Khalji.

BEYOND DELHI

The Sultanate of Delhi had become smaller and weaker. This gave many chiefs a chance to set up kingdoms of their own. The result was that the map of the country was once again broken up into many patches.

Bengal had its own Nawab. So did Jaunpur, in what is now eastern Uttar Pradesh. If you have travelled in western India you must have seen or heard of the lovely cities of Mandu and Dhar. These were the capitals of Malwa, yet another powerful kingdom of this time. There was Gujarat from where beautifully woven silk and gold thread came. Kashmir too had its own Sultans. Many of them were patrons of learning.

The Sisodias of Mewar

In the foothills of the Himalayas, Rajsthan and the hilly tracts of central India ruled hardy Rajput chiefs. The Muslim kings of Delhi had defeated most of the Rajput families. But some still remained who refused to bow down to the conqueror. The strongest of these were the Sisodias of Mewar. Their chief was the great Rana Kumbha. He fought many wars. Once he defeated the king of Malwa. To celebrate his victory, be built a tower at Chittor. This tower still stands and is one of the things that you must see when you go to Rajasthan. Rana Kumbha was not only a fine soldier. He was also an artist. He wrote plays and poetry and loved good music.

The greatest of the Sisodias of Mewar was Rana Sangram Singh. He was popularly called Rana Sanga. All the clans of Rajasthan loved him, and looked upon him as their leader. He was a brave warrior. People spoke about him with respect and fear. They said he had eighty scars on his body from wounds he got in battles. He had lost an arm and an eye. And his leg had been injured by a cannon ball. He fought and defeated the Afghans eighteen times. But when he fought Babar, he lost the battle. The Mughal cavalry proved too quick for his slow elephants. After him, the greatness of Mewar passed away.

The Bahmani Kingdom

South of the Vindhyas, there were two very important kingdoms—the Bahmani kingdom and the kingdom of Vijayanagar.

The Bahmani kingdom lasted for about two hundred years. Under Sultan Firoz Shah, it stretched right across the Deccan from the Arabian Sea to the Bay of Bengal. Among the Bahmani kings, there were many wise and good rulers. Artists and poets came to their court from Persia and from other lands. Many fine buildings were put up by these kings.

Urdu is one of the important Indian languages today. The word Urdu means 'camp'. The language was given that name because it was first spoken by soldiers in camps. A large number of very good Urdu books were written in the time of the Bahmani kings.

The last of the Bahmani kings was a very weak man. After his death the provincial governors set up five separate sultanates. These were the kingdoms of Ahmadnagar, Berar, Bijapur, Bidar and Golconda.

The Kingdom of Vijayanagar

South of the river Tungabhadra, near the big new dam, is a small town called Hampi. Visitors go their today to see the ruined buildings that lie scattered all over. These buildings are all that remain of what was once the capital of a very wealthy and powerful kingdom. It has a long story, because it lasted for more than two hundred years.

When Vijayanagar was at the height of its glory, it included the whole country south of the river Krishna. Travellers came from Italy, Portugal, Persia, Samarkand and many other lands to see the wonders of the court. They were struck by the beautiful temples and palaces, by the fine horses and elephants, and the well laid-out city. One of the greatest kings of Vijayanagar was Krishnadeva Raya. He loved beautiful things. He was very kind to artists and poets. Writers of Telugu and Sanskrit were given all the help they wanted. Some of the best buildings of Vijayanagar were put up by Krishnadeva. While he was on the throne, an important thing happened in the country. The Portuguese took Goa. About this we will hear more later on.

Almost from the very beginning there was frequent fighting between the Vijayanagar Empire and the Bahmani Kingdom. Even after the five separate Sultanates were formed, the two rival sides never became friends.

After Krishnadeva Raya, Vijayanagar had a ruler called Rama Raya. He once insulted one of the Sultans. This Sultan persuaded all the other Sultans to join together against Vijayanagar. A great battle was fought near Talikota on the banks of the river Krishna. The forces of Vijayanagar were badly defeated.

After this defeat the capital of the empire was looted and burnt. It became a deserted, broken city. Power in the Deccan passed into the hands of the Sultans, but they in their turn were to lose it to the Mughals.

THE BHAKTA SAINTS

After the invasions of Mahmud of Ghazni, the Muslims who came did not come to loot but to settle in India and make it their home. They mixed with the Hindus, and learnt some of their ways. That is why many marriage ceremonies and festivals are celebrated in the same way by both Hindus and Muslims. The Hindus too learnt many things from the Muslims. For instance, they learnt how to make paper. They also learnt the Persian language. Hindustani was a mixture of the languages of the Hindus and the Muslims.

When the Hindus and the Muslims began living together, something new, something that was neither Muslim nor Hindu but a mixture of the two, was born. The monuments built in India at this time had something Persian or Central Asian about them because Persia and Central Asia were the home of some of the early Muslim conquerors. They also had something of the old Hindu style. That is why this style of building is called Indo-Muslim architecture. This mingling of the two streams, the Muslim and the Hindu, could be seen in everything in the way of thinking and living, in the books that were written, in music and in the religious beliefs of the people.

You have been reading of kings and kingdoms. Now let us learn something about the ordinary people, about farmers and artisans. There was a lot of difference between the rich and the poor. The poor did not bother about who ruled because they believed that their condition would remain the same, no matter who became king. When great battles were being fought, only a few kilometres from the battlefield farmers were seen quietly doing their work, not caring who won or lost.

The caste system had become even stricter and people of the lower castes were treated badly. They did not feel that they had anything in common with the upper classes.

Then something remarkable happened. It started with a simple idea and a new way of looking at religion and God. When you are older you will

understand that ideas can be so powerful that they change the lives of people. This new way was the way of the Bhaktas. It grew and spread until it had the whole country in its spell. Bhakti simply means devotion or love. The path of Bhakti brought the Hindus and the Muslims closer together. The saints who preached it are called the Bhaktas. They bound all parts of the country in a common bond and brought new hope to the poor people of India. This is how it started.

Ramanuja

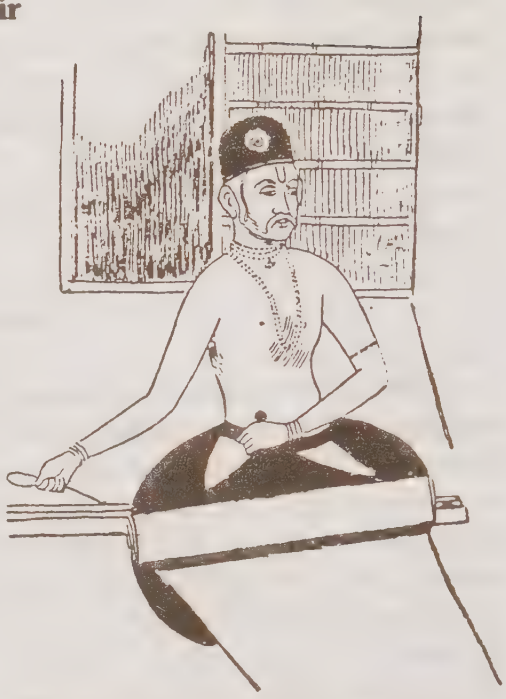
When the Muslims were beginning to settle down in India, a great man was born at Sriperumbudur, a small place near Madras. His name was Ramanuja. When he grew up, he saw that the Hindus had become very narrow-minded. The higher castes did not want to have anything to do with the lower ones. To most Hindus, religion meant only a long round of meaningless ceremonial and prayers which they did not understand. Ramanuja believed that the only way to reach God was to forget oneself and to love Him with perfect devotion. This was Bhakti. Ramanuja taught this lesson at Kanchi, then a great centre of Sanskrit learning. What Ramanuja said was not new. It had been written in the *Upanishads* and in the *Gita*. But this was the first time anyone had tried to spread the message of Bhakti among the common people in their own language. A large number of people became followers of Ramanuja.

Ramanuja believed that the only way to reach God was to forget oneself

Ramanuja had a pupil called Ramananda. Ramananda took the message of his teacher to Varanasi. Soon a number of followers collected round him. These followers were not only Brahmins. They came from all castes. Some of these were rich, but most were poor. Even a Muslim weaver was among them.

Kabir

Perhaps you have already guessed who the weaver was. He was Kabir, the great saint whose songs have been sung all over the country ever since they were written, "God is one, whether we worship Him as Allah or Rama," said Kabir. Fasting or telling the beads of a rosary was of no use without true devotion. God was not to be found in a stone image or in holy books. He only lived in a heart that was full of love. Thousands of people, both Hindus and Muslims, became disciples of Kabir. When he died, the Hindus and the Muslims started quarrelling over his body. The Hindus wanted to burn it, and the Muslims to bury it. There is a legend that when the sheet over him was lifted, his followers found not a body but a heap of rose petals which they divided between themselves. Even today there are many people who follow the religion of Kabir. They are called Kabir-Panthis.



"God is one, whether we worship Him as Allah or Rama", said Kabir

Nanak tried to bring the Hindu religion and Islam closer together

Nanak

After Kabir, another great saint was born in Punjab. He was Guru Nanak. All his life he tried to bring the Hindu religion and Islam closer together, to find a common bond between the two. Like Kabir, he believed that all

men were equal in the yes of God, no matter what their caste or religion. "God will not ask a man his tribe or sect, but what he has done," said Nanak. He wanted to teach this to as many people as possible. He went with his message to Muslim mosques and Hindu temples; he went on pilgrimages to Mecca as well as Varanasi, Hardwar and Puri. He, too, had a very large number of disciples. Guru Nanak's followers are called Sikhs. The word 'Sikh' comes from the Sanskrit word Shishya, which means disciple.

Mirabai

Another famous Bhakta was a lady called Mirabai. She was a Rajput princess who had been married into the royal family of Mewar. But she cared for neither fine clothes nor bright jewels. Her thoughts were only for the Lord Krishna, whom she loved. She worshipped him and composed songs for him. She sang these songs all the time. These *bhajans* of Mirabai are sung all over India even today.

Mirabai's thoughts were only for the Lord Krishna, whom she loved

The message of Bhakti spread like fire. In every part of the country saints arose. In Bengal there was a saint called Chaitanya. In Maharashtra were Jnaneswar and Tukaram, about whom you will read more later on. In Gujarat there were Dadu and Narsi Mehta. All these saints spoke and wrote the language of the ordinary people. They declared that the poorest and lowest of them could reach God without the help of priests, and without performing ceremonies, if only they would fill their hearts with love. Bhakti itself became a new religion.

THE MUGHALS

Babar

Now we come to the Mughal period, which is another important age in our history. Six famous emperors, known as the Great Mughals, ruled the country for nearly two hundred years. The first of them was Babar; Aurangzeb was the last. Babar came to India as an invader, like his ancestor Timur, but then decided to make it his home and that of his dynasty.

Babar means 'lion'. He became the ruler of a small kingdom in Central Asia when he was only twelve years old. When he grew older, he conquered Kabul. He used to watch camel caravans coming from India, laden with spices and cloth. He made up his mind to conquer India one day. And when that day came, he took the Punjab without much difficulty. Then he marched upon Delhi. Ibrahim Lodi, who then ruled over Delhi came out with a huge army three times the size of Babar's. The two met at Panipat. But Babar had firearms and very able generals. One of them was his son Humayun. In those days the use of artillery was new. Ibrahim's elephants got frightened of the noise and turned back and trampled the soldiers of their own side. Twenty thousand men of the Lodi army including Sultan Ibrahim were slain. It was a great victory for Babar.

After this he defeated the Rajputs who were led by the brave Rana Sanga of Mewar of whom you have already heard. Babar also defeated the Afghan nobles of Bihar. With these victories his empire stretched right from the Hindukush mountains to the borders of Bengal.

Babar was a soldier full of courage and the spirit of adventure. But he was also a learned man. He wrote down whatever he saw and felt. His writings are called *Babar Nama*. He spent the last year of his life in Agra, dreaming of the cool waters and muskmelons of Farghana, the home he had left behind so many years before. He loved running water and beautiful

gardens. When he passed away, having laid the foundations of a great empire, his body was taken all the way to Kabul where he was buried.

You have perhaps heard of the story of Babar's death. His son Humayun, whom he loved very much, fell ill. A holy man came to comfort Babar and said that if he wanted to save his son's life, he must give up the most precious thing he had. Babar willingly agreed. His nobles thought that he would give up a famous diamond he had. But Babar said his own life was more precious to him than a jewel. As the holy man directed, he went three times round Humayun's bed. After this Humayun got better and better. Babar fell ill and died.

Babar was a soldier full of courage and the spirit of adventure

Humayun

Humayun was Babar's favourite son, and was chosen to be king after him. The first thing Humayun did was to march against the king of Gujarat. Humayun was very brave in battle. But he had one great fault. He liked to enjoy himself even when there were more important things to do. After conquering Gujarat, he settled down to a life of pleasure.

While Humayun was spending his time drinking and listening to poetry, Sher Shah Suri, an Afghan chief of Bihar, rose in revolt against him. In the fighting that went on for two years, Humayun was defeated. Most of his army was captured or drowned. It is said that a water-carrier saved his life by letting him cross the river on his bag of skin. Sher Shah Suri beame king of Delhi and Agra, while Humayun became a homeless refugee. He wandered from place to place for fifteen years.

With a few faithful followers, Humayun crossed the desert of Rajasthan. Many of them died of heat and thirst. At last he reached a place called

Amarkot in Sind. He felt he was still being pursued by his enemies; so he left his wife at Amarkot and pushed on westwards. He had not travelled far when a messenger came galloping after him with the news that a son had been born to his wife. This newborn baby was Akbar, who later became the greatest of the Mughal emperors. Humayun had nothing with which he could celebrate the happy occasion, but a piece of musk. This he broke and distributed among the loyal friends who had never left him in his misfortunes. None of his brothers offered him shelter. He was forced to go to Persia.

Sher Shah Suri

Sher Shah, who took Humayun's place on the throne of Delhi, was a wise ruler. He was very good to his people, especially the poor peasants. He had all the land measured and divided into *parganas*. Accounts were written in both Persian and Hindi, so that all his subjects could understand them. The peasant had to pay a fixed amount to the king and no officials could get more money out of him than was due.

Sher Shah built many roads and planted trees along them. One of the roads he repaired and broadened was the ancient one which ran from the Afghan border to Bengal. Because of good roads, trade also increased and merchants grew rich.

When Sher Shah died, it gave Humayun a chance to take back his father's throne. He sat on the throne of Delhi for only six months. One morning, while he was in his library, he heard the call for prayer. He was hurrying down the polished steps of the library, when his foot slipped. He was badly hurt and died soon after. His thirteen-year-old son Akbar became king.

AKBAR'S EMPIRE
KABUL
PESHAWAR
KANDAHAR
SRINAGAR
Jhelum
LAHORE
Brahmaputra
Sutlej
Indus
DELHI
Ganga
Yamuna
RAJPUTANA
AGRA
AMARKOT
SIND
CHITTOR
BIHAR
MALWA
BENGAL
Narmada
GONDWANA
BERAR
Godavari
AHMADNAGAR
GOLKONDA
BIJAPUR
MASULIPATAM
Krishna
Kaveri
POLYGARS
CALICUT
COCHIN
MADURA

AKBAR AND THE LATER MUGHALS

When the young Akbar came to the throne no one could have guessed that he would be one of the best kings the world has known. Akbar was lucky in having a guardian called Bairam Khan who had served his father and grandfather. When a general called Hemu rose in rebellion, Bairam Khan got together his army, and vanquished Hemu in a battle which was fought on the same field where his grandfather Babar had defeated Ibrahim Lodi.

When Akbar was about eighteen years old, he took the Government into his own hands. He decided to make his empire bigger and not to rest until it extended from Burma in the east to Persia in the west. This took him twenty years of hard work.

The Rajputs had never been happy with the Muslim kings and looked upon them as foreigners. One of the strongest forts of the Rajputs was Chittor. It was built on the top of a hill. Rana Sanga's son Udai Singh was at that time the ruler of Chittor. But he was a weak man. Akbar decided to attack this famous fort. It was not an easy task. Again and again the Mughal armies had to fall back. Jaimal was an important Rajput general who had been charged with the defence of Chittor. During an attack, Akbar saw him behind the battlements. He fired a shot at Jaimal and killed him. Udai Singh fled from the city. The Mughal armies climbed up the hill and rushed into the fort. The 8,000 Rajputs inside fought till the last of them had fallen. From a distance, Akbar saw black smoke curling over the towers of Chittor. He knew that the brave Rajput women had jumped into the fire as was their custom so that they might not fall into the hands of the victor. The next morning, he rode into the fort on an elephant. All the wealth of the city was taken to Agra and Chittor became a ruin.

Maharana Pratap

A small band of valiant Rajputs led by Maharana Pratap, the son of Udai Singh, pledged that they would defy the Mughal armies. From the hills and valleys of Rajasthan they kept up a heroic resistance for twenty-five years. They slept in the open on hard rocks and ate wild fruit of the forest. At long last, Maharana Pratap's lone battle against the might of the Mughal empire was lost and the power of the Rajputs was broken.

One of Akbar's great qualities was that he could make friends of his enemies by being kind to those he had defeated. He married a Rajput princess and gave high positions to Rajput noblemen in his court. In his eyes, there was no difference between them and the Muslim officials.

After Rajasthan, Akbar also conquered Gujarat, Bihar, Bengal and Orissa.

His foster-brother, Adham Khan, was sent to conquer Malwa for him. He attacked the fortress of Mandu where Baz Bahadur, the king of Malwa, lived with his beautiful Hindu wife Rupmati. He loved her very much. After defeating Baz Bahadur, Adham Khan wanted Rupmati for himself. One evening, when he went to the palace he found her lying on her couch. When he came close to her, he discovered that she had poisoned herself and was dead. When Akbar heard of the way in which Adham Khan had behaved he was very angry.

For many years Akbar's armies fought against the tribes of the north-west. Kashmir was also conquered. Akbar's empire was now much bigger than his grandfather's had been. But there was one thing which still worried him. The kingdoms of the Deccan had not accepted him as their master. One of these kingdoms was Ahmadnagar. When Akbar's army invaded Ahmadnagar, Chand Bibi, a valiant queen, fought bravely against the invaders. But she was forced in the end to give in to the Mughals.

A big empire alone does not make a king great. It is what he does for his people that really matters. Akbar took great trouble to make sure that everyone of his subjects was treated fairly. He divided his empire into fifteen provinces, so that each part might be properly governed. As Sher Shah Suri had done before him, he ordered all lands to be correctly measured. Each farmer knew how much he had to pay in taxes. When there was no rain, or

crops were destroyed by storm, the farmers were let off from paying. Akbar's dealings with the peasants were even better than Sher Shah's. For this the credit also goes to Raja Todar Mal, who organized Akbar's system of land taxes.

Akbar used to call holy men of all faiths to his palace and have long talks with them

There were many cruel customs in India in Akbar's time. One was that of Sati. According to this custom, when a man died, his widow burnt herself alive along with him. Another bad custom was the marriage of children who were much too young to know the meaning of marriage. A third bad thing was that Hindus and others who were not Muslims had to pay a tax called Jazia. Yet another shameful thing some rich people did was to take defeated soldiers and keep them as slaves for the rest of their lives. Akbar passed laws against all these evil practices.

Akbar was a religious man. Ever since his boyhood he had a great longing to discover a way of worship which would give him peace. One of the things that made Akbar specially sad was that people of different religions quarrelled and fought amongst themselves. He believed that every religion had some good in it and he was always eager to learn more about other religions. He used to call holy men of all faiths to his palace and have long talks with them. He also started a new religion of his own called Din-i-Ilahi, which means Divine Religion. Many of his nobles took to it. Akbar did not do this just to add a new religion to the many that there already were in India. He thought the Din-i-Ilahi was a religion that all people could follow, and he hoped that it would end religious quarrels. Unfortunately not many of the common people were attracted to Akbar's religion.

You will be surprised to know that the emperor could hardly sign his name! Nevertheless he had a hunger for knowledge. He was always happiest when he was surrounded by scholars, artists, or men who were skilled at something. Akbar called nine such men his Nine Gems. His chief minister Abul Fazl was one of them. Faizi, the poet who translated the *Bhagavad Gita* into Persian, were another. The famous musician Tansen was a third. The witty Birbal, whose clever jokes you must have heard, was also one of Akbar's most prized gems. So was Raja Todar Mal.

You must wonder how we know so much about Akbar. Much of it we know from Abul Fazl who wrote a book about the reign of this great ruler. This book is called *Akbar Nama*, and it tells us a great deal about Akbar and his times.

Akbar is remarkable for many things. He was a great warrior and builder. He had a noble city built which was named Fatehpur Sikri. Because of his respect for all religions, the people of India came to have a feeling of unity, as though they were all members of the same household.

Tulsidas and Surdas

You have already learnt something of the Bhakti movement. In Akbar's time, there lived in India two very great people who followed the way of Bhakti.

One of them was the famous Tulsidas. He wrote the Ramayana in simple Hindi. This books is called *Ramacharitmanas*, and you can hear it sung or recited even today.

Tulsidas wrote the Ramayana in simple Hindi

The second Bhakta of this time about whom you must know something was the blind poet Surdas. He composed thousands of poems. The most famous of them describe the childhood of the Lord Krishna and the pranks he played on the *gopis* and cowherds of Braj.

The language that these two poets wrote was not only simple but also very beautiful. Their songs, along with those of Mira, are still the most popular songs in northern India today.

Jahangir

When Akbar died, his son Salim became king. He called himself Jahangir, which means conqueror of the world. Jahangir kept all Akbar's arrangements as they were, and even tried to make them better. He thought that it was the right of each of his subjects, whether he was rich or poor, to get full justice. So he had a big bell fixed near his room. A chain was tied to it, and one end of it hung at the gates of the royal palace. Whoever wanted to appeal to the emperor for justice could ring the bell at any time of the day or night. While the emperor loved justice, he was also harsh in punishment.

When Jahangir was still a prince, there was a Persian nobleman at his father's court. He had a beautiful daughter called Mehrun Nisa. After Prince Salim became emperor, he made her his queen and called her Nur Jahan, the Light of the World. He loved her so much that anything she wished was done at once. Jahangir gave her father and her brother very high positions at his court. He asked her advice in everything he did, and left many important decisions to her. Gradually she became the real ruler, while

Jahangir began to spend more and more of his time listening to poetry and looking at beautiful paintings. Nur Jahan's portrait was struck on the royal coins and seals along with the emperor's. Once she even led the Mughal army to crush a powerful noble.

The fame of the riches of India had spread to Europe. Many countries wanted to trade with India. One of these was England. In the reign of Queen Elizabeth, who ruled England at the same time as Emperor Akbar ruled India, a trading company called the East India Company was allowed to send merchants and ships to India for trade. Portuguese traders had already settled down in many places on the coast. They did not want the English to come and become their rivals. English envoys came to India to meet the emperor. They begged the emperor to help the English merchants of the East India Company. One of these Englishmen was Captain Hawkins, and another was Sir Thomas Roe. They were very respectful to the emperor and brought a lot of presents. There was a great stir at the court. Most of the Mughal nobles had never seen an Englishman before. English clothes and hats seemed very strange to the Mughal ladies and they were greatly amused to see them.

There is a story that Jahangir's daughter was very ill when Captain Hawkins came to the Mughal court. He knew something of medicine and offtered to treat her. As luck would have it, his medicine worked and the princess became well again. The emperor was delighted with Hawkins and, as was the fashion of kings, asked him to name any reward he liked. "I want nothing for myself," said the Captain, "but I beg your Majesty to help my country in trading with yours." Jahangir agreed, little knowing what this would lead to one day.

Jahangir was a great lover of beauty. He was struck by the loveliness of Kashmir and visited it many times. He was returning from a holiday in the valley when he passed away. He lies buried on the banks of the river Ravi. After his death, Shah Jahan became the emperor of India.

Shah Jahan

Shah Jahan's name is known all over the world because he was the builder of the Taj Mahal. He built many other beautiful buildings, including the Red Fort and the Jama Masjid in Delhi. The Jama Masjid is one of the biggest mosques in the world.

Shah Jahan had a queen called Mumtaz Begum whom he loved very much. They had many children and lived a happy life. Then Mumtaz Begum fell ill and died. Shah Jahan vowed that he would build for his dear queen the most wonderful tomb that anyone could imagine. He collected the best builders and artists that he could find, and spent a great deal of time and money on the building of the Taj Mahal. It took more than twenty years to finish. The cost of labour alone would come to more than 45,000,000 rupees today. The Taj is counted among the wonders of the world and is one of the most beautiful monuments built by man.

The best painters and poets came to Shah Jahan's court and were given costly prizes for their work. He ordered a new throne to be made for himself which would be more splendid than that of any other emperor. Jewellers and goldsmiths worked on the throne for seven years. The figures of two peacocks, blazing with precious stones of many colours, surmounted the canopy over the throne. It was called Takht-i-Taoos or the Peacock Throne, and cost over a crore of rupees.

The Taj Mahal took more than twenty years to finish

The splendour of Shah Jahan's palace was famous, and visitors came from many countries of Europe to see its marble halls inlaid with precious gems, the fine dresses of the courtiers and the pomp and pageantry of court

ceremonial. All this cost Shah Jahan a big fortune, but he was a very rich king. The Mughal empire had never been as big as it was under him.

The money, of course, came from the peasants and farmers. They became poorer and poorer because they could not afford to pay for all the things their emperor and his courtiers wanted to do. The man who tills the land has always been India's real strength. When he does not do as well as he should, it is a sign that the country will not do well either. This is what began to happen now.

The last days of Shah Jahan were not happy. When he had become an old and weak man, his four sons began to fight amongst themselves for the crown. The eldest, Dara Shikoh, was his favourite. He built a great library and was interested only in books. The second son was brave and intelligent, but he was slow to make up his mind. The fourth was always busy enjoying himself. It was the third son, Aurangzeb, who won the fight for the crown.

He defeated his brothers one by one, put his old father in prison, and had himself crowned emperor. He was then forty years old. Shah Jahan died eight years later.

Aurangzeb

We saw how the luxury of the emperors and the nobles of the court caused a great deal of misery to the people. The poor farmers could not pay the heavy taxes that they were asked to. They left their villages and went to the cities to look for work. The traders too had a difficult time. Tax collectors were always after them, on the roads, in the bazaars and on the ferries. The people were unhappy and even unruly. Aurangzeb's officers found it hard to control the Jat peasants around Delhi and Agra, who refused to pay taxes. Far in the north-west, Pathan tribesmen started to loot the caravans of merchants that went from India to Kabul. Aurangzeb's army had to fight the Pathans for twelve years before there were peace in the tribal areas.

Rajputs

Many Rajput chiefs also wanted to become free of the Mughals. Aurangzeb used force to make them obey him. If he had used kindness and friendship instead, like his great-grandfather Akbar, it would have been better

for his empire. Raja Jaswant Singh of Marwar was a Rajput warrior and was a commander in Aurangzeb's army. He died on the north-west frontier where he had been sent to subdue the tribesmen. Aurangzeb at once sent his own men to take charge of Marwar. He had Jaswant Singh's widow and baby son brought to Delhi to live in the Mughal palace. He wanted to make sure that the young prince would never demand his father's kingdom when he grew up. The Rajputs got very angry. Jaswant Singh had a band of loyal followers. One night they stole into the palace and took the young prince and his mother with them. The sentries were taken by surprise. They tried to stop them, but the Rajputs were quick with their swords and fought their way out. The Rajputs held out against the Mughal armies as long as their strength lasted. But at last they had to surrender.

There were other people in the north who disliked the Mughal government. These were the Sikhs, about whom you will read more later. Aurangzeb tried to force their Guru, Tegh Bahadur, to submit to him. When he rufused, Aurangzeb had him killed. There is a big Sikh temple in Delhi to mark the place of his execution. The Sikhs were furious. Guru Tegh Bahadur's son, Guru Gobind Singh, who was then only a boy of twelve, made up his mind to avenge the cruel murder of his father. He waged a long, bitter struggle against the Mughals for many years. Two of his sons were killed fighting; two others who were boys aged eight and nine years were taken prisoner and executed.

The Marathas

In the Deccan, the Marathas grew in strength. The man responsible for this was the great Shivaji, whose story you will read later. Aurangzeb spent nearly twenty years trying to break the power of the Marathas.

The Marathas lived in hilly country along the Western Ghats and had a large number of fortresses. They were skilful horsemen and were used to a very hard life. The Mughal army, with its camels, elephants and large number of soldiers, moved very slowly. The Maratha horsemen would swoop down on the army, galloping hard, and throw everything into disorder.

The wars in the Deccan had cost Aurangzeb a lot of money, and the people were made to pay heavy taxes. And while the emperor was away, his officers bullied the people and did not care much about their duties. No highway was safe because no one bothered to stop the robbers from looting travellers.

Aurangzeb was a serious man by nature. Some years after he became emperor, he banned music at his court. He also dismissed all the poets, artists and historians that his father and grandfather had brought to the court. He lived a simple life. Although he was the ruler of such a vast empire, he earned his living by sewing caps and writing down verses of the Holy Quran. He was a very strict Muslim, and believed that the only right way of living was to follow Islam. He pulled down many Hindu temples and imposed extra taxes on Hindu merchants. He also reimposed the Jazia tax on all those who were not Muslims. All this made the Hindus his enemies. They no longer cared for what happened to the Mughal empire. Nor did the Muslims become more loyal, because they were divided and made to suspect each other. When he died at the age of eighty-eight, Aurangzeb had managed to undo all the good work that Akbar had done.

LAST DAYS OF THE EMPIRE

If the roots of a big and powerful tree are eaten away, it is bound to fall sooner or later, no matter how strong it may look. The same is true of a State. If the people who are its foundation are unhappy, it will collapse, however strong or big it may look from the outside. The empire of the Mughals had become like that in the time of Aurangzeb. By his actions, he had made the Sikhs and the Hindus dislike him.

After Aurangzeb, there were fifty years of widespread fighting and confusion in the country. Most of the kings who succeeded Aurangzeb were weak, and they were interested only in enjoying themselves. One such king was Muhammad Shah. He kept himself surrounded by musicians and dancers, and spent his time in drinking and entertainment. He, therefore, came to be known as Muhammad Shah Rangila, or Muhammad Shah the Colourful. One of the nobles, a man called Asaf Jah, tried to make the king behave like a real king. But this had no effect. Asaf Jah left Delhi in disgust and went to Hyderabad. There he set up a government and declared himself independent of the Mughal king. The Nizams of Hyderabad were descendants of Asaf Jah.

Soon afterwards, the Governor of Bengal also followed Asaf Jah's example and declared that he would not recognize the authority of the Mughal throne. The same thing happened in Oudh. Slowly the Mughal empire, which had once stretched over almost the whole country, shrank to a few patches of land around Delhi. The emperors still wore their crowns, and coins were still struck in their names. But they had little power.

Nadir Shah

At this time, there was another invasion from outside. This time the invader was Nadir Shah, one of Persia's mightiest warrior kings. He marched through Kabul, Peshawar and Lahore and triumphantly entered Delhi. A few

days later, some of his soldiers were murdered in the streets. He was mad with rage, and gave an order to his army to kill any Indian citizen they wanted to, and to loot whatever they liked. The beautiful buildings of Chandni Chowk were set on fire and reduced to a heap of ashes. Nadir Shah returned home laden with whatever was left of the Mughal imperial wealth. He took horses and elephants, gold and costly garments. He also took the famous Peacock Throne, and the world's most famous diamond, the Koh-i-Noor. Nadir Shah's invasion was a terrible blow to the Mughal empire. From this blow it never recovered.

THE MARATHAS

As we saw, Aurangzeb had to spend almost half of his reign fighting the Marathas. He thought they were a danger to his empire. They did not like outsiders to rule over their country and the way Aurangzeb treated Hindus made the Marathas even greater enemies of the Mughals. When the Mughal empire broke up, the Maratha horsemen conquered nearly the whole of northern India. They went right up to Bengal, and to Delhi and even north into Punjab. For over a hundred years they were the most powerful force in India until the British became masters of the country.

How did the people of Maharashtra become so powerful? That is an interesting story. You have heard of Kabir, Nanak and the religion of Bhakti. The Bhaktas of Maharashtra did much to bind the Marathas together.

Jnaneswar

One of them was called Jnaneswar. He did not like the Brahmins to feel that only they had a right to be near God, that only those who understood Sanskrit could read the holy books. So he wrote the Gita in the language that ordinary people spoke. The Brahmis were very angry with him. They thought that he had taken away something of the sacredness of the Gita. A strange story is told in Maharashtra about him. Once he made a buffalo recite the Vedas. The foolish Bramins understood at last what he was trying to show them. It was wrong to think something holy could be spoilt simply because it was recited by those who were not Brahmins. Did they not see that even an animal could remember God!

Tukaram

Another great saint of Maharashtra was Tukaram. He was born in the family of a farmer. Even as a boy he spent long hours worshipping God. He was generous and kind and was always giving away whatever he had. He

was so gentle that even birds and animals were not afraid of him. Later in life Tukaram gave himself up entirely to prayer. He called to the lowest and humblest of people to join him in the adoration of his deity Vithoba or Panduranga. The Brahmins did not approve of this, and they were often very cruel to Tukaram. Once he was dragged through a hedge of thorns. Another time he was forced to throw into the river all the hymns he had written. But soon the songs of Tukaram became popular and began to be sung throughout Maharashtra. These songs are called *abhangas*. Abhanga means something which can never be broken.

Ramdas

Ramdas was another important Bhakta saint of Maharashtra. He lived about the same time as Tukaram.

For twelve years, he wandered all over the country. Like Shankaracharya, nearly a thousand years before, he set up a number of 'maths' and temples dedicated to Hanuman. He was a Bhakta of Rama, but he worshipped Hanuman because Hanuman had served Rama as an ideal Bhakta should. Hanuman had also been strong, and strength was just what Maharashtra needed.

Ramdas spent another twelve years in prayer and *kirtan*. The *bhajans* he wrote are still sung in Maharashtra and his wisdom is famous.

An amusing story is told about him. When he was getting married he suddenly got up and left the pandal because one of the words the priest spoke during the ceremony, was *savadhanam*, which means 'beware'.

Jnaneswar, Tukaram, Ramdas and other Bhaktas woke Maharashtra from a long sleep of hundreds of years. All that the sturdy Marathas needed now was a leader. Such a leader was Shivaji.

SHIVAJI

Shivaji was a remarkable ruler

The year Shah Jahan was crowned king at Delhi, a child was born far away in a hill fortress in the Western Ghats. At that time nobody realized that one day this child would grow up to be the biggest challenge to the power of the Mughal dynasty and one of the greatest sons of India. This was Shivaji.

Shivaji's father was an officer in the army of the Sultan of Bijapur and spent most of his time away from home. Shivaji was brought up his mother, Jijabai. She was a very religious woman of great courage and was devoted to her son. She told him stories of the brave Pandavas and the noble Rama, and sang songs to him about the wonderful things that the ancient heroes of India had done. Shivaji made up his mind that when he grew up he too would do big things.

His friends were the wild shepherd boy of the hills. He loved to ride with them. Very soon he could ride the wildest horse, and find his way through the thickest jungle. He also became a very good shot. Soon many young men collected round him and began to call him their leader.

When Shivaji was only twenty years old, he attacked some forts which belonged to the Sultan of Bijapur and captured them. When the Sultan heard of it, he arrested Shivaji's father and demanded an explanation. All that the poor father could say was that he had no control over his son.

Shivaji did not mend his ways even after this. He went on raiding the lands of the Bijapur Sultan and harassing his army. At last the Sultan could

bear it no longer. He sent one of his generals, Afzal Khan, with a large army to punish Shivaji. Afzal Khan boasted that he would bring Shivaji back in chains without even getting off his horse. What actually happened, however, was quite different. As Afzal Khan's army came near, Shivaji returned with his men into the hills, near a strong fortress called Pratapgarh. Afzal Khan waited in the plains for many weeks. When he got tired of waiting, he sent a message to Shivaji suggesting that the two should meet and settle things without fighting. Shivaji agreed. The two met, but not as friends. Afzal Khan came with a dagger hidden in his sleeve. But Shivaji had worn a steel helmet under his turban and a coat of mail beneath his dress. He was also wearing tiger claws of steel on his fingers. First the two seemed to be embracing, but people soon realized that they were fighting. In this fight, Afzal Khan was killed. A cannon was fired from Pratapgarh fort, and the Marathas fell upon the army of Bijapur and destroyed it.

Shivaji now decided to test his strength against the Mughals and started raiding their territory. Aurangzeb had contempt for Shivaji at first and called him Mountain Rat, but he soon learnt to respect him. His armies fought Shivaji for nearly twenty years, without any success. Shivaji never came out in the open because his men were fewer than the Mughals and did not have such good weapons. He used what are called guerilla tactics. His horsemen would attack the Mughal army when it least expected to be attacked and then disappear before an action could be organized against them. By the time the Mughals recaptured a fort from the Marathas, Shivaji was eighty kilometres away, storming another one! The mighty Mughal army could not keep pace with Shivaji's fast-moving cavalry.

Aurangzeb got so fed up with Shivaji's tactics that he decided to lay a trap for him. He invited him to visit Agra, the Mughal capital, along with many other chieftains. Shivaji loved adventure. So one day he walked boldly into the Mughal durbar without any weapons whatsoever. Aurangzeb offered him a seat along with people much lower in status than him. Shivaji felt insulted and flew into a terrible rage. H strode out of the court. Aurangzeb ordered him to be kept a prisoner in the rooms in which he was staying. But Shivaji was too clever for his guards. He pretended to be ill, and one day escaped from the palace hidden in a large basket of sweets. His return home was a great triumph and Shivaji was crowned king of the Marathas.

Shivaji was a great leader. His soldiers and his people loved him and

were ever ready to lay down their lives for him. They admired him because he was brave and fearless; and they trusted him because he was fair and always looked after them. There were many qualities in Shivaji which impressed even his enemies. He had a genius for warfare. He planned his raids with great care and chose all the officers in his army himself. He was very strict with them, and did not let them break any rules.

Shivaji was a remarkable ruler and did many things for the people of Maharashtra, especially the villagers. He had all the land measured and fixed the tax that had to be paid to him. He broke the power of the rich landowners who lived on the toil of poor peasants. Before Shivaji's time, titles and honours used to pass from father to son, even if the son did not deserve them. Shivaji stopped this unfair system. In his time, the Deccan was better ruled than it had ever been before. Shivaji had eight ministers who helped him in looking after his kingdom.

Shivaji was also a very religious man. He honoured the saint Ramdas as his guru. So great was his devotion that he once offered him his whole kingdom.

Bards in Maharashtra still sing songs about the bravery of Shivaji, and his love for his land. He lived about three hundred years ago, but he is still among the favourite heroes of our country.

AFTER SHIVAJI

Sambhaji and Sahu

Shivaji's son Sambhaji was not like his father. He was selfish and believed only in having a good time. When Shivaji died, Aurangzed had a little difficulty in capturing Sambhaji. He was carried off and put to death. Sambhaji had a little son called Sahu. Aurangzeb thought the best way of keeping a hold over the Marathas was to get Sahu under his control. He kept Sahu at the palace under his own care. When Sahu grew up, the Mughals set him free and sent him to the Daccan to claim his place as the head of the Marathas. They hoped that Sahu's appearance would make the Marathas fight amongst themselves and make them weaker. For a while this trick worked. But soon after, the Marathas resumed their fight against the Mughals.

The First Peshwa

There was a clever Brahmin called Balaji Vishwanath who helped Sahu to rule. While Sahu went out shooting and fishing, Balaji looked after the affairs of the state. He also made Sahu get rid of the influence of the Mughals. Sahu made him his Chief Minister and gave him the title of Peshwa. When Sahu died, the power passed into the hands of the Peshwa. He shifted his headquarters to Poona. After him his son ruled the people of Maharashtra. Thus was founded the house of the Peshwas which ruled the Deccan and part of northern India for nearly a hundred years. They ran the affairs of Government very ably and became more and more powerful. In their time, Maratha soldiers conquered more territories and set up states of their own. That is how the principalities of Baroda, Gwalior and Indore were founded. Maratha states covered a vast area of India.

The Peshwa was so sure of his power that he sent his army north. Delhi

was captured without much trouble; the emperor who sat on the throne had hardly any power to resist. At that time, there was an Afghan called Ahmad Shah Abdali who invaded the Punjab. The Marathas, full of confidence after their success in Delhi, went north to meet him. There was a fierce battle at Panipat. The Marathas were badly defeated. They lost 200,000 men. This was a hard blow from which they never really recovered.

After this battle of Panipat, the Maratha states and chieftains began to quarrel amongst themselves. When one of them declared his independence of the Peshwa, the Peshwa appealed to the British for help. This was a very good chance for the British and they started meddling in the affairs of Indian rulers, playing one against the other. When the British agreed to help the Peshwa against other Maratha chiefs, rivalries and jealousies between them increased still further. There was civil war and rebellion in all the Maratha territories. Nothing could be better for the British. Soon they got all the Maratha chieftains under their control.

THE SIKHS

When Babar came to India there lived in the Punjab a saint called Nanak. You have already read of the part he played in the Bhakti movement. He believed that the system of caste was wrong and that all men, whether they were Brahmins or Shudras, Hindus or Muslims, were the same in the eyes of God. Many people collected round Nanak and called him their guru. These followers came to be known as Sikhs, which means shishyas or disciples. That is how the Sikh community began.

The Ten Gurus

When Guru Nanak felt that he was about to die, he did not let either of his two sons succeed him but chose a faithful disciple to carry on his work. In this way, the Sikhs had ten Gurus. At first the Sikhs were a quiet and peaceful people, interested only in the worship of God. Emperor Akbar who respected all religions gave their Guru a piece of land, where there was also a small tank, to build a temple. This temple was later rebuilt in marble and its domes covered with gold leaf. Around it grew up the biggest trading centre of the Punjab and it came to be known as Amritsar. It is even today the holiest place of pilgrimage for the Sikhs.

Arjun Dev

The fith Guru, Arjun Dev, compiled the Adi Granth, the holy book of the Sikhs. This book has not only the writings of the Sikh Gurus but also of many Hindu and Muslim saints like Kabir, Farid and Namdev.

Why did a peaceful people like the Sikhs become so warlike? It was because the Mughals started to ill-treat them. Guru Arjun helped one of the rebellious princes. This made the emperor so angry that he had the Guru imprisoned, and finally put to death.

The murder of their Guru caused great anger among the Sikhs. Their next Guru, who was the son of Guru Arjun Dev, refused to put on the necklaces that the people offered as tokens of their respect. He said, "The only necklace I will wear is my sword-belt." He organized his followers and raised a small army. He was arrested and put in prison by the Mughal emperor.

Aurangzeb cared for no religion except his own. In his time, Tegh Bahadur was the Sikh Guru. He was arrested and ordered to give up his faith. When he refused he was beheaded.

Guru Gobind

Tegh Bahadur's son, Gobind, was the last Guru of the Sikhs. Under his guidance, the Sikhs became a very large and powerful brotherhood of soldiers. He called them Khalsa or 'The Pure'. To become Khalsas, the Sikhs had to be baptized. They were given 'amrit', after it had been stirred by a dagger, to drink. They were given new names with 'Singh', which means 'lion', at the end. They promised to keep themselves ready to defend their faith and their people and always carry kirpans or swords on their person. Like the sages of ancient times, they were ordered never to cut their hair or beards but to become an army of soldier-saints. When Guru Gobind Singh passed away, he told his people that after him there would be no Guru but they must regard the Adi Granth as their teacher. That is why the book is called Guru Granth Sahib.

The struggle between the Sikhs and the Mughals lasted for more than a hundred years. There was a lot of bloodshed and hundreds of Sikhs were killed for refusing to give up their religon.

Banda

After Guru Gobind, the Sikhs found a remarkable leader in a man called Banda. He was an unknown sadhu whom the Guru met just before he was murdered. Banda swore to avenge the cruelties inflicted by the Mughals. The Sikhs flocked into Banda's army. They defeated the Mughal armies and looted the district of Sirhind. Then the royal army came from Delhi. Banda and his soldiers fled to Gurdaspur. The army pursued them and surrounded them on all sides. After many months of terrible hardships the Sikhs were forced to surrender. Banda, his wife and little son, together with a thousand

soldiers were captured and taken to Delhi. There they were treated with great cruelty and most of them were killed.

The Afghan invader Ahmad Shah Abdali also tried to wipe out the Sikhs and destroyed their temple at Amritsar. The Sikhs were quick to take revenge. They fell on his retreating army and deprived him of the loot he was taking away.

Ranjit Singh

The Sikhs divided themselves into twelve groups called misls. The leadership of one of these misls fell to a very able and daring young boy called Ranjit Singh. He brought the Sikhs together and made a great people out of them. Although he was a short and thin and had only one eye, he was a born fighter, and a wonderul horseman.

At the age of eighteen, Ranjit Singh became ruler of Lahore, the main city of the Punjab. After Lahore he took Amritsar, Multan and then Peshawar and some places beyond it. He rebuilt the temple at Amritsar in marble and covered its domes with gold.

A big danger which faced the Sikh kingdom was the British who were by now masters of the whole of India except the Punjab. Ranjit Singh was a wise man and knew that it was no use fighting them until he was strong enough to do so. He remained friendly and agreed that the river Sutlej should be the boundary line between the British territory and his own. Ranjit Singh ruled for forty years and worked hard to make the Sikhs a mighty power.

The Khalsa army built up by Ranjit Singh was over 50,000 strong and trained by European officers. After Ranjit Singh there were ten years of chaos when one after another the Sikh rulers were murdered by their relatives. The British found a golden opportunity and moved up their troops to the Sutlej and started building bridges across the river. The Sikhs forestalled them and waded across a ford to the other side. There were four bloody battles fought between the British and the Khalsa army and at last, let down by traitors in their ranks, the Sikhs laid down their arms. The Sikh kingdom was taken by the British. Its infant ruler Dalip Singh was made prisoner and removed to England. The famous diamond Koh-i-Noor, which the Sikhs had wrested from the heirs of Nadir Shah, was taken and cut up to adorn the British Crown. This happened about a hundred and fifty years ago.

LIFE IN THE MIDDLE AGES

Again and again people have come to this land from outside, bringing with them their own language, religion, dress and other ways of life. But in course of time, they have become part of the people of our country. In the earlier pages, we read about kings and soldiers who, when they came, were Afghans, Turks or Mongols, but in a matter of a few years became Indians. When these newcomers settled down as Indians, they also greatly influenced the rest of the people. We have seen that the Sultans and Emperors of Delhi and the kings of several other parts of India were Muslims. So were their soldiers and the scholars at their courts. Because of their influence, a great many people who were of this country also became Muslims. Many learnt the languages of the newcomers, such as Persian and Arabic. They adopted their customs and modes of dress. Many who did not become Muslims themselves still respected the Muslim holy men. We have read about people like Kabir, Nanak and Akbar who taught that the religions of the Hindus and the Muslims were not against each other. We have also seen that the mingling of the new tongue and the local speech gave rise to Urdu.

Not Urdu alone, but most of the languages that we now speak began to develop in the middle ages. The ancient Indians spoke Sanskrit, Prakrit, Pali, and old Tamil. In course of time, other languages arose in different parts of the country. Among them were various forms of Hindi in the Indo-Gangetic plain; Bengali, Oriya and Assamese in the east; and Marathi and Gujarati in the west. In the south, Kannada, Telugu and Malayalam flourished in addition to Tamil. Poets in these languages wrote on various themes, but stories from the Ramayana and the Mahabharata were their favourites. We have read about Tulsidas and the Ramayana he wrote. Like him many of the poets were great devotees. Their songs helped the Bhakti movement. As we have seen, the Bhakti movement taught the people to believe that they could earn the grace of God even if they were not very learned, provided they were truthful in their dealings and were devoted to God.

Most Brahmins and others continued to study the sacred books in Sanskrit. But the old Gurukula system had faded out, and so had the great universities. But in the temple towns, Sanskrit scholars taught the ancient Shastras. Similarly, colleges were attached to many large mosques. Many Hindu scholars learnt Arabic and Persian and Muslims became experts in Sanskrit. One of them was Dara Shikoh, Aurangzeb's brother, who translated the Upanishads into Persian.

The coming together of the two different strains could be seen clearly in music. You have already read of Amir Khusro who lived at the court of Alauddin Khalji and who designed the *sitar*. Even at the time of Khusro, some Persian melodies had become part of Indian music, and people, whether they were Hindu or Muslim, learnt music in the same manner.

Many buildings built during these centuries still stand. The Sultans of these times and the Mughals were great builders, and put up many mosques and minars, palaces and forts. The Qutb Minar near Delhi, the Taj Mahal at Agra, the Gol Gumbaz of Bijapur and the Red Forts of Delhi and Agra are very famous. A very large number of Hindu temples also came up during these times. Among them were the great temples of Madurai and Vijayanagar. The beautiful structures at Khajuraho, Konarak, Belur and Mount Abu had been built a little earlier.

The princes and nobles lived in great luxury. They had fine palaces, and wore costly dresses; they ate the choicest food and amused themselves with music, dance, indoor games like chess and outdoor sports like polo. Many of them kept men and women as slaves who could be bought and sold as they liked. Slaves were sometimes imported from foreign countries. Where did the wealth of these rich nobles come from? It came from the common people. The poor people had to pay several kinds of levies and whenever there were wars—and there were many, many wars—they could not be sure of safety even in their homes.

In their villages, the panchayats still settled disputes and collected taxes. we have read about Sher Shah and Akbar and the new revenue system that they started. The revenue system of the Mughals was gradually introduced in all parts of the country. Words like jamabandi, jagir, kharif and taccavi, which were used by the Mughals, are even today in use in all parts of the country.

The kings had large armies. Gunpowder had come into use, and horses

were imported in large numbers. Although armies were constantly on the march, the roads of the country were not in a very good state. However, the kings got news from the farthest corners of the land through horsemen who galloped at great speed carrying the royal mail. The kings, in spite of all their riches, were not greatly interested in knowing about the outside world. When a map of the world was given to Jahangir by a foreign traveller, it is said that he did not even open it. The Portuguese brought printing presses with them. But the people did not take to printing till much later. The old Sanskrit scholars continued to write their books on dried palm leaves although they could have got paper.

The look of the cities began to change. Several new cities and commercial centres sprang up. Some of these were Ahmedabad, Surat, Cambay, Calicut, Dacca, Chittagong, Hooghly, Bijapur and Golconda. Delhi, Lahore and Agra also became great and prosperous cities on account of the Mughals. An English visitor who came to India about the time of Akbar wrote of Agra and Fatehpur Sikri that they were both greater than London was in those days.

As in the earlier ages, our merchants traded a good deal with foreign countries like China, Persia and Arabia. Arab traders sold Indian goods even in European cities. Indian cloth and Indian spices were in great demand. It might interest you to know that several kinds of cloth take their names from Indian towns. The word calico, for example, comes from Calicut.

Because India was famous for its riches in those days, several travellers came to our country. Some came for trade alone, but many more came just out of curiosity. Some of these visitors have left very interesting accounts of what they saw. One of them was an Arab called Ibn Batuta. He came to India at the time of Muhammed Tughlak. Another was Marco Polo, an Italian who lived for many years in China and then came to India in a sailing ship. Marco Polo has left a colourful account of the manners and customs of the Indian people in those days, of the great wealth of the country, and of the wonderful skill of its craftsmen.

SHIPS FROM EUROPE

You have read that long, long ago Indian ships sailed as far as Egypt on one side and China on the other, and traded with many countries. Ships of foreign nations, particularly of the Arabs, sailed along our western coast.

Travellers carried back to their countries stories of the great riches of India. An Italian went back and told his people that Indian muslims were as fine as the web of a spider, and the spices such that even a king would want to taste them again and again. Traders from many countries longed to come to India, but it was a very difficult and expensive business to come by land. "If only we could reach India in a sailing ship!" they all said to themselves. Many tried, but failed. Then a man called Christopher Columbus set out with three sailing ships in search of India. Instead he discovered America!

The Portuguese

At last, a sailor found the sea route to India. He belonged to a small country in Europe called Portugual and his name was Vasco da Gama. Vasco da Gama sailed round Africa and reached India. He stayed for six months. He returned home with his ships full of spices and other rare things that he had bought in India. After this, many other Portuguese ships came to India. Then the Portuguese soldiers and sailors seized a place called Goa on the west coast. This happened more than 400 years ago and the Portuguese did not give up Goa until only a few years ago, long after the British and the French, who came later, had given up their possessions in India peacefully.

The Portuguese bought pepper and ginger in Malabar and sold these in Europe. They also carried on a brisk trade with the rich kingdom of Vijayanagar of which you already know something. They made such large profits that many other countries of Europe wanted to do the same.

The Dutch

Traders from Holland were the first to follow their example. The Portuguese did not like this and there was much fighting between the two. But the Dutch were stronger and drove the Portuguese from many of their settlements.

After the Dutch came the Danes. Then came the English and the French. Since they all wanted the same thing—trade with India—each tried to push the others out.

The English proved the strongest of all and drove out all the other Europeans. Slowly, from traders they became rulers of India.

THE COMING OF THE BRITISH

The English people have always been good sailors. At the time of which we are talking, they had the best navy in Europe. "If the Portuguese and the Hollanders can sail to India and make large profits in trade, why cannot we?" they asked themselves.

The East India Company

A group of merchants formed the East India Company and went to their queen, Elizabeth I, and got her permisison to trade with the countries of the East.

The ships of the East Indian Company first landed at Surat, which was a large port and a rich city in those days. Emperor Jahangir allowed British traders to put up warehouses to keep the spices, indigo and the cloth they bought in India and the woollen cloth, tin and iron which they brought from England to sell in exchange.

After Surat, the English merchants built trading posts at Madras, Calcutta and Bombay. At that time, these big cities of today were only small villages for which the English had to pay very little. They bought Madras from a raja. When they were firmly settled in the south, they set up factories on the river Hooghly in Bengal. This was the beginning of Calcutta. The way the English got Bombay is an interesting story. The king of England married a Portuguese princess and was given Bombay with her dowry. It was then a small fishing village about which hardly anyone knew. The king rented out the village to the East India Company for only 130 rupees a year!

The condition of India was disturbed at this time, because the Mughal empire had become very weak. Nobody bothered about the emperor. The Marathas were quarrelling amongst themselves. This encouraged the English to decide to stay on in India. They began to change from trading to ruling,

and sent out the riches of the land to their own country. India began to lose its independence bit by bit.

The British built forts round their settlements and began to keep soldiers and guns to guard themselves. Very soon their forts became strong and their armies more powerful than those of the Indian princes.

The English traders took away most of the trade from the hands of their European rivals, the Portuguese and the Dutch. Only the French remained. The French had also set up trading centres and built forts at Pondicherry and some other places. The leader of the French in India was a very able man called Dupleix. He had dreams of building a French empire in India. The leader of English, Robert Clive, was even cleverer and wanted to take India for the British. When he came to India he was only a clerk in the East India Company. But he soon became the leader of the English in India. Both the English and the French tried to gain power by taking sides with Indian princes and hiring out their armies to them, so that little by little the Indian princes became weak and powerless. In these tactics, the British succeeded more than the French.

THE BEGINNING OF A NEW EMPIRE

Robert Clive was an adventurous boy. He came to India against his father's wish, to work as a clerk for the East India Company. He used to sit in a hot, crowded office writing on files, but his thoughts were far away. He wanted to wield a sword instead of a pen.

Clive saw that the Indian rulers were quarrelling amongst themselves. Like the clever monkey in the story of the cats who fought over a piece of bread, he began to take part in these quarrels. Each time he got away with some advantage for England. The monkey in the story, pretending to divide the bread absolutely equally, kept weighing it and biting off a piece from the heavier bit, until there was nothing left for the cats!

The Tale of Arcot

One of the first quarrels in which Clive took part was between Chanda Sahib and Muhammad Ali. They were powerful nobles who wanted to sit on the throne of Arcot in the south. Chanda Sahib asked the French to help him. Muhammed Ali asked the British. Both the French and the British gladly agreed as it gave them a chance to fight each other. They were rivals not only in India but even in their home countries in Europe at that time.

Muhammed Ali's fort was surrounded by Chanda Sahib and the French. Clive did not have many soldiers and knew he could not fight his way through to Muhammed Ali. Instead, he went with 300 sepoys and 200 British soldiers to Arcot, which Chanda Sahib had left without any defence. When Chanda Sahib heard what Clive had done, he was very upset. He left Muhammed Ali's fort and rushed to Arcot, but could not win it back. The British brought Muhammed Ali to Arcot, put him on the throne, and declared him the Nawab. But, of course, he was not a real Nawab. The British made him do whatever they wanted.

The soldiers who had come from England only to look after the British merchants and their property now began to fight battles with Indian rulers. Soon, the British became the most powerful people in south.

The Battle of Plassey

In those days there were no railways and Bengal was far off. Siraj-ud-daulah, the Nawab of Bengal, did not like what the British had done in the south. He ordered them to take down the guns on their fort at Calcutta. The British officers of the Company refused to obey him. The Nawab attacked the fort.

When news of this reached Madras, Clive decided to go to Calcutta. He sailed up the river Hooghly and met the Nawab's forces on the field of Plassey. The British had sent a secret offer to the Nawab's general that they would make him the Nawab if he let his master down. The general betrayed his master and the British won an easy victory.

The battle of Plassey is famous in our history because after it the British became the greatest power in India.

The Nawab was killed and the British put his traitorous general on the throne. He had to give them many presents in money and land. The servants of the Company were greedy and never seemed to be satisfied. When the general had nothing left to give them, they got rid of him, and put another prince on the throne. The prince did not like the ways of the British. He asked the Mughal king of Delhi and the Nawab of Oudh to help him. But even their combined forces were not strong enough and were defeated by the British.

After this victory, the British demanded that they rule Bengal along with the Nawab. The weak Mughal emperor, who was king only in name, had to agree. He granted them the Diwani of Bengal. And so, the English merchants became rulers. This joint rule was very bad because neither the Nawab nor the English did anything for the people except take money from them. There was great misery and famine in the land.

The King of England was very pleased with Clive for what he had done for his country. Clive was given the title of Lord and was made the first Governor of Bengal.

When his term was over, Clive went back to England. He had become old. Although he had done everything to build the British Empire in India, some people in England did not like the way he had acted. He was accused of being cruel and dishonest. He became very sad and miserable and finally killed himself.

THE FIRST GOVERNOR-GENERAL

Bengal, as you already know, was a very unhappy place when Clive and the Nawab governed it together. The English merchants only wanted to get rich as fast as they could. The Nawab was so weak that he could do nothing for the people. Most of the officers were dishonest. The poor peasants were bullied by tax-collectors who cared only about filling their own pockets. The people who ran the East India Company in England realized that such things could not go on for ever without harming them.

Warren Hastings

There was a man called Warren Hastings who, like Clive, had been a clerk of the Company. He knew a great deal about India. People in England thought that he was honest, fair-minded and strong, and was just the man to put their affairs in India right. So they sent him out as Governor of Bengal.

Warren Hastings was a strict man. As soon as he came to Bengal, everyone could see that he would not put up with dishonest tax-collectors. In each district he set up courts of law, so that anyone who had been badly treated could ask for justice. One of the good things Warren Hastings did was to get some English scholars to study Sanskrit classics and the ancient law books of India.

Why did Warren Hastings try to put things right in India? Because he knew that to hold real power, the British would have to understand the Indian people and to win their confidence. At the same time he had to make money for the Company. He even offered to hire out his troops to the Indian princes for large sums of money. He got forty lakh of rupees from the Nawab of Oudh for helping the Nawab to conquer some territory.

So far, what the Company did in India had been no one else's business. But when it began to interfere so much in the affairs of Indian rulers, and

acquired large territories, the British Parliament brought the Company under its control and began to watch and guide whatever it did. Under the new arrangement, Warren Hastings was made the first Governor-General. He was made responsible to the British Parliament for whatever he did in India.

The Company used to pay money to the Nawab of Bengal and the Mughal emperor whose estates it had taken away. Warren Hastings cut down these payments. He also forced some Indian princes to pay him money. Once he demanded money from the Begums of Oudh. They did not have the sum he demanded and had to sell all their jewels. The Begums were treated so harshly by Warren Hastings that even people in England were angry with him for his ungentlemanly behaviour. He had to face a trial for his deeds in India. A famous speaker, Burke, made a great speech in the British Parliament. In this speech he criticized Warren Hastings and supported the Indian people's right to justice.

Before they could be absolute masters in India, the English had to reckon with many rival powers. You have seen earlier how they dealt with the French, the Marathas and the Sikhs. Another strong rival was the brave Hyder Ali of Mysore. With him Warren Hastings had to wage many battles.

BRAVE FATHER AND SON

Hyder Ali

Hyder Ali was a soldier who could neither read nor write. But he was a brave and intelligent man. He became the king of Mysore and made up his mind to drive out all the powers in the south, and become the strongest ruler himself. Day and night he worked towards this end. Very soon he had a huge army. The Marathas, the British and the Nizam of Hyderabad were all jealous of the growing strength of Mysore.

Hyder Ali swept down like a great storm upon the plains of Madras with an army of 80,000 soldiers and 100 guns. He defeated the British in the first battle. Then Warren Hastings sent down more soldiers from Bengal and the tide turned against Hyder Ali. He was deserted by his friends, but he fought on to the bitter end. Although he was defeated by the British, he did not give up hope of being able to overpower them one day. But before he could regain his strength, he fell ill and died, his dreams still unfulfilled.

Tipu Sultan

His son, Tipu Sultan, was as brave and warlike as his father and carried on the fight against the English for many years. He was both brave and clever but the English got the better of him. He had to give up half his kingdom, send two of his sons as hostages to the

Tipu Sultan was both brave and clever

English, and pay huge amounts of money. But he did not give up hope. He built up his army again, and asked the French to side with him. This was like tossing a burning match into a heap of gunpowder. There were many bloody battles between Tipu and the English. Tipu Sultan was killed at Srirangapatnam, bravely trying to defend his fortress. He was buried near his father with military honours. So ended the life of one of India's most valiant soldiers. After this, Mysore passed into the hands of the British. At this time the English Governor-General was Lord Wellesley.

Both Hyder Ali and Tipu were good kings. They tried to rule all their people well, no matter what their religion might be.

HOW BRITISH POWER GREW

After Warren Hastings, more than twenty other Governors-General came to India, one after the other. With each, the power of the British in India grew, and more areas came under their control.

Cornwallis

A Governor-General called Lord Cornwallis made important changes in the way land was managed in Bengal, which at that time included Bihar and Orissa. He gave some people the permanent right to collect taxes from the peasants. These people, called zamindars, had to pay in return a fixed amount of money to the British every year. They came to be regarded as the owners of the land. This was called the Permanent Settlement. The zamindars began to collect from the peasants very much more than they had to give to the British. They made large profits and remained faithful to the British because their own interests depended on it.

As more lands came under the British, the zamindari system spread to other parts of the country, particularly Bihar and Uttar Pradesh. The result of the system was that the poorest Indians, the peasants, became even poorer. They had to give almost everything they had to the zamindar. Their condition became pitiable in times of famine.

It was only after we became free that laws were passed to end the zamindari system and make farmers the owners of the land they worked on.

Wellesley

Lord Wellesley was a very able Governor-General. He thought of a shrewd plan and persuaded many Indian rivals. Those who agreed not only paid money for being "protected" by British troops, but also lost their freedom. Even so, many rulers accepted Wellesley's plan and realized too late

that they had become slaves of the British. Tipu Sultan was one prince who refused Wellesley's offer. For this, he had to fight a war with the British. You have already read of this war and how Mysore passed into the hands of the British as a result of Tipu's defeat.

Hastings

Another Governor-General, the Earl of Hastings (different from Warren Hastings), fought a war with the Gurkhas, the hardy, martial people of Nepal, and defeated them.

He also fought the Pindaris, who were unruly bands of robbers. Among them were Pathans, Jats and Marathas who had once been soldiers in regular armies. The Pindaris had their headquarters in Malwa, but people for many miles beyond trembled in fear of them. They would swoop down on the villages, looting, buring and killing. They had two famous leaders called Karim and Chitu. The Earl of Hastings made up his mind to wipe out the Pindaris. He planned his line of action carefully. British troops completely surrounded the area where the Pindaris operated, and closed in on them. The Pindaris could not fight very well in regular battle. One of the leaders surrendered, and settled down as a peaceful farmer. The other escaped on his fast horse into the jungle. Many days later his body was found, half-eaten by a tiger.

The Earl of Hastings also defeated the Marathas who had been ruling over a very large part of the country. This was an important victory for the British, as the Marathas had been a challenge to them for a very long time.

Bentinck

A Governor-General who did a great deal for the Indian people was William Bentinck. He did much to stop some cruel old customs of India. In some Hindu familes, a widow was expected to burn herself on the funeral pyre of her husband. The emperor Akbar had tried to stop this beastly custom. He had not succeeded. Lord Bentinck, helped by many Indian leaders, also tried to stop this practice. People who had anything to do with it were punished.

Before the time of Bentinck, very few travellers and pilgrims on the roads were safe from robbers who disguised themselves as travellers. They

were called Thugs. They used to take innocent people unawares and strangle them, later emptying their pockets and bundles of everything valuable they might have been carrying. Lord Bentinck tried hard to wipe out Thugs from the highways of the country.

Dalhousie

You have seen how large parts of the country were taken over by the British bit by bit. Punjab was the last important part to go. It was conquered by a Governor-General called Lord Dalhousie.

There still were some areas ruled over by princes who had signed the treaty of protection. Lord Dalhousie followed a new policy according to which the State of any ruler who died without leaving a son behind would pass into British hands. Oudh, Satara, Nagpur and Jhansi are some of the States that the British took over in this way. The famous Rani of Jhansi fought against this policy. About her you will read more in the next chapter.

Two Indias

You must have realized that at this time there were really two Indias—British India which was administered by the British, and Indian India which consisted of regions still in the hands of Indian princes. They were called Native States. At the time of the Great Revolt, British India had four major provinces. Bengal, Bombay, Madras and the North-Western Province. The more important Native States were Hyderabad, Mysore, Baroda and Travancore. There was a great difference in these two Indias. In British India, rules and laws for all Indians were the same everywhere. For instance, although Calcutta is more than 1,600 kilometres from Bombay, a man accused of theft was tried by the courts in exactly the same way. In the States, on the other hand, the ruler had a free hand. Some of the smaller States had no laws except the whim of the prince. But the British kept a close watch on the doings of the princes through officers called Residents or Political Agents.

THE GREAT REVOLT

If you have ever gone to Delhi, you might have noticed that the grey stone wall surrounding the old city has been badly damaged. At some places it has been completely knocked down. This has also happened to many buildings in Lucknow. This damage was done over a hundred years ago, when there was a great uprising against the British. It started with some Indian soldiers, but soon princes and landlords also joined in. Many leaders of the revolt were killed fighting bravely, and have become national heroes. But there were many more who did not take part in this attempt to drive out the foreigners.

There were several reasons for this revolt. Indians were getting more and more dissatisfied with the greedy ways of the officers of the East India Company. The Company gave only small jobs to Indians; all the bigger offices were reserved for the British. Naturally, the Indians did not like this. It hurt their self-respect that they could not hold high offices or run their own affairs. They also knew that the rule of the British meant that more and more wealth went out of the land.

The ruling families of India had lost all their power to the British. But since they were not used to being treated roughly, as the British often treated them, many turned against the British. The way in which Lord Dalhousie took over many kingdoms made them angry. Then there were the common folk who were unhappy because they had lost their livelihood. Indian weavers and spinners found that suddenly nobody wanted the cloth they made. The machines in England produced cheaper cloth and India was flooded with mill-cloth and many other machine-made things from England, which our people were forced to buy.

You have already read of the zamindari system that was making the lives of the poor peasants miserable.

BRITISH INDIA
AFGHANISTAN
NORTH-WEST FRONTIER PRO.
JAMMU & KASHMIR
PUNJAB
TIBET
BALUCHISTAN
Delhi
UNITED PROVINCES
NEPAL
SIKKIM
BHUTAN
ASSAM
RAJPUTANA
SIND
BIHAR
BENGAL
Calcutta
BURMA
Kathiawar
CENTRAL PROVINCES
BOMBAY PRES.
Bombay
ORISSA
HYDERABAD
ARABIAN SEA
BAY OF BENGAL
GOA
MADRAS
Madras
MYSORE
TRAVANCORE
ANDAMAN AND NICOBAR ISLANDS
LACCADIVE ISLANDS
COCHIN
CEYLON
Cape Comorin

Greased Cartridges

To add to all this, the British did not try to learn the ways and customs of the Indians. One of the most thoughtless things they did was to introduce in the army a new kind of cartridge, a portion of which had to be bitten off with one's teeth before it could be fired. It was believed that these cartridges were smeared with grease made from the fat of cows and pigs. This made both the Hindu and the Muslim soldiers very angry.

The revolt started with the sepoys at Meerut. One day some of them refused to obey the orders of their British officers and fired on them. The army was full of hatred already, and rebellion spread like fire.

Bahadur Shah, the powerless Mughal emperor of Delhi, was made the leader of the revolt, though he was very old and had always been fonder of poetry than of war. The fighting took place mostly in Delhi, Uttar Pradesh, Bihar and Madhya Pradesh. People in other parts of India largely kept aloof. There still was not enough spirit of nationalism to make all Indians band themselves together against a foreign enemy.

The Rani of Jhansi

Some very brave men and women took part in this struggle. Among the

Dressed in men's clothes, the Rani of Jhansi led her soldiers to war against the British

most famous of them was Rani Lakshmibai of Jhansi. Dressed in men's clothes, she led her soldiers to war against the British. Even her enemies admired her courage and daring. Her last battle was the bravest. She fought valiantly and although beaten, she refused to surrender and fell as a soldier should, fighting the enemy to the last.

Tantia Tope

Tantia Tope was another hero of this uprising. He was a millitary leader of great skill. Instead of fighting in the open he made surprise attacks on the British forces at different places. He came to the help of Rani Lakshmibai but too late to save her from defeat and death. In the end, he was captured and sentenced to be hanged. The brave fighter was not at all afraid to die. He went firmly up the steps of the scaffold and put the noose round his neck with his own hands.

Nana Sahib

Nana Sahib, a friend of Tantia Tope, led the revolt against the British at Kanpur. More than four hundred Englishmen with a number of women and children defended themselves against Nana Sahib's angry men but finally had to surrender.

The Delhi Story

A day after the revolt broke out at Meerut, the Indian rebels galloped to Delhi and took it from the British. They occupied the palace and proclaimed that Bahadur Shah, the aged Mughal, had again become emperor of Hindustan.

It was very important for the British to get Delhi back because it was the centre of activity for the rebels, and also because it had been the capital for so long. A month after its loss, the British fought a battle and took up a position on the famous Ridge which overlooks the whole city. From here they went forward, blew up Kashmiri Gate, and captured the city and the palace after fighting hard for six days. Nicholson, the leader of the British force, died of a wound. The city was sacked by British soldiers and hundreds of people were killed with bayonets.

The Fate of Bahadur Shah

Bahadur Shah, who had fled to Humayun's Tomb, was arrested. His two sons were taken as prisoners of war. They were later shot dead for no good reason. Bahadur Shah was exiled to Burma where he spent his last years in misery. Here he wrote some very moving poems in Urdu which have become famous. His pen-name was Zafar. He died in Rangoon, a sad and broken man of eighty-seven.

When the revolt spread to Lucknow, all the English officers, and all Europeans and Christians, with about seven hundred local sepoys, retired to the Residency. The rebels completely surrounded the Residency and cut off supplies to the garrison. The siege lasted for nearly a month and a half. After this a British contingent fought its way in with much-needed food and ammunition. But it took two months more for the garrison to be finally saved.

Begum Hazrat Mahal

The young Begum of Oudh, Hazrat Mahal, was a very brave woman. She ruled on behalf of her infant son who was to ascend the throne of Oudh when he came of age. She took an active part in the defence of Lucknow against the British. Although she was a queen, used to the veil and a life of luxury, she appeared on the battlefield herself to encourage her troops. Begum Hazrat Mahal held out against the British with all her strength as long as she could. Ultimately she had to give up and take shelter in Nepal.

Two Other Fighters

In these troubled times a man named Liaqat Ali rose to be a leader in the city of Allahabad. He was a humble man who had been born a weaver. He became a schoolmaster. He was so greatly respected that people joined him when he rose against the British. He was as kind as he was courageous, and even in the midst of fighting he did his best to keep law and order. He became well known as the Maulvi of Allahabad.

Another man who was a brave fighter against the British was Ahmadullah Shah, the Maulvi of Faizabad. A large number of people loyally followed him. He was defeated in a fierce battle at Shahjahanpur. He tried to

take refuge in a fortress on the border of Oudh, but the Raja of the fort closed his gate against him. Then the Maulvi charged on an elephant. He made an easy target and was shot down. The Raja claimed fifty thousand rupees as a reward for the Maulvi's head from the British.

Kunwar Singh

Kunwar Singh, another hero of the uprising, was an old Rajput ruler of a small State in Bihar which the British Governor-General tried to take away from him. Many stories are told about Kunwar Singh. Once when he was crossing the Ganga, he was hit by a British bullet on the wrist. It was a deep wound, and his followers were afraid it would get worse and infect his whole arm. Kunwar Singh unsheathed his sword. With a stroke he cut off the injured arm and threw it into the river. Then he smiled and said : "This is my last offering to the motherland." At this time Kunwar Singh was eighty years old.

Company Rule Ends

Fighting went on for more than a year. The Indians fought for a good cause but not all of them joined in the fight, and those who did, fought at different times and different places. In the end they had to give in.

British authority was established once again, and India's first fight for freedom was lost. Many British generals like Nicholson and Havelock became heroes of England. Although they won a victory, the British also learnt a lesson. It was this. They could no longer think only of making money in India. If they wanted to stay in India and govern it, they would have to do it with more wisdom and foresight.

At this time, Queen Victoria was ruling in England. After the Great Revolt it was decided that India should be ruled by her Government and not by the East India Company. The Governor-General became the Viceroy, or one who acts for the King or the Queen. Many benefits were promised to the people in a proclamation made in the name of Queen Victoria at a *durbar* held in Allahabad. One of the promises was that people would be allowed to follow their own religions as they liked.

NEW THOUGHTS FROM THE WEST

The Great Revolt, which you have just read about, was a protest against the way the East India Company dealt with the Indian people. And it brought about big changes in the way the country was ruled.

The Industrial Revolution

But, in the meantime, there was another kind of change, not only in our country but in the whole world. And such a big change had not come for a long, long time. What happened was that, all over the world, machines were invented to do the work that men did. And these machines could work much faster and do much more than men could. This was called the Industrial Revolution. It was the people of the West who devised these machines, but slowly the machines came to India also. The railway engine is one of the most important of these machines. The first railway line in India was laid near Bombay even before the Great Revolt. Sometimes wild animals used to frighten away workers who were laying the tracks, and elephants would stand in the way of a train and stop it. You can imagine how difficult it must have been to lay the new railway lines.

In the old days, letters used to be carried from one town to another by men who ran all the way. Places where they stopped for rest gave the letters to another runner came to be called Dak Bungalows. In the time of Lord Dalhousie, about whom you have read, telegraph lines were laid in India for the first time. The postal system was also improved.

The railway, the telegraph and the improved postal system were signs that the world was becoming modern. People in India were very suspicious of all these new things, just as people everywhere in the world had been when machines brought to them things they had not been used to before. Actually, this very suspicion was one of the reasons for the Revolt. For people thought that these machines would harm their religion.

But, as in the rest of the world, the machines had come to stay. The laying of railway lines made it simpler for the British to rule India. India is a vast country and not easy to govern. While one part is under control, another, more than 1,600 kilometres away, may break loose. The network of railways laid across the country, cutting through jungles and mountains, made the farthest corners of the country easy to reach in a short time.

The Teaching of English

About this time, a number of Christian missionaries started schools where English was taught. Many Indians began to send children to such schools because they thought it would benefit them if they learnt English. People have always had to learn the language of their rulers, whoever they may be. When the rulers were Mughals, the language of the court was Persian.

Learning the language of the rulers helped people to get jobs. By this time the British also realized that it was expensive to get Englishmen all the way from England. The most sensible thing to do was to teach Indians to do work in the way the British wanted it to be done. By starting English education in India, the British wanted to build up a class of people who were "Indian in look and colour, but English in taste and opinion". Our people also learnt many things about the people of Europe—how they lived, what clothes they wore, what they thought. When the children of these English schools and colleges grew up, they were given small adminsitrative jobs under British officers.

In course of time, universities were opened in the three most important cities of the country at that time—Calcutta, Madras and Bombay. It will be easy for you to remember that the universities were started in the very year in which the Great Revolt took place.

The French and American Revolutions

More and more people in India began to believe that if they wanted to learn science and know about the new inventions, they would have to learn English. By this time there had been two famous revolutions in the world—the French Revolution and the American Revolution. They had both been uprisings for the sake of freedom and people's rule. The wise and learned

men of Europe and America had been thinking that all men should have the same rights and that all men should be free. Among the people who spoke and wrote about freedom was a Frenchman called Rousseau and an Irishman called Burke. Many Indians were thrilled to read the writings of Rousseau, Burke and other great men of the age. They began to think and talk of freedom, freedom not only from foregin rule, but from the slavery of our own cruel customs and backwardness.

In those days women were not treated very well. We have already seen how people tried to stop the wicked practice of Sati. There were other hardships that women had to suffer. Girls used to be married off while they were still babies. If they lost their husbands, they were forced to spend their entire lives in the most difficult conditions. It was considered very bad to educate girls. All these things slowly began to change. Schools were started for girls.

Some educated Indians began to feel that religion should also be made as simple as possible. They wanted to put an end to the meaningless ceremonies and festivals. One such person was Raja Ram Mohun Roy who founded the Brahmo Samaj. You will read more about him later.

One of the valuable machines that began to be used in India at this time was the printing press. With its aid, people published newspapers and books. Through the printed word a person could share his thoughts with people in other parts of the country.

Many new cloth mills and factories were built in the country. Trains brought raw materials to these factories and took away the things they produced. The areas around the factories thus grew bigger and busier as time went on. This is how Bombay, Calcutta and Madras grew into big cities.

The British had one system of administration for the whole of British India. The police and the army maintained peace and order. New courts took the place of the old Persian type of law courts. New laws were drawn up which could be applied in the same way in the different areas of the country. The man who drew up these laws, which were called the Indian Penal Code, was Lord Macaulay. He was mainly responsible for introducing English education in Indian schools.

The British also built many roads. They improved the ancient road that ran from Calcutta to Peshawar and called it the Grand Trunk Road. It is

India's most important highway because it passes through the rich lands of the Punjab, Haryana, Uttar Pradesh, Bihar and Bengal, and also connects the bigger cities of northern India.

Have you ever thought of the new foods that the Europeans brought with them? Do you know that there was no potato in India before the ships began to come from Europe? The same is true of guava, tamato, papaya and groundnut. Chilli, maize (makai) and tobacco were also unknown. Most of these things had been newly discovered in Central America and came to India from Europe. The Europeans taught us tea-drinking and tobacco-smoking. Crops like tea and coffee began to be grown on a large scale. People began to wear hats and new kinds of clothes. Tables and chairs of the English type came into daily use.

In all provinces people began to learn the English language. The whole country was ruled by the same laws. There were newspapers and books, railway trains and good roads, which made it possible for people of different provinces of India to know each other better. Because of all these things, the people began to think and feel that they were one people, sons and daughters of the same motherland. As this feeling grew, India began to get stronger from within.

THE BIRTH OF MODERN INDIA

After putting down the Great Revolt, the British became stronger in our country than ever before. There was no one of challenge their rule. Being the masters, they did not consult our people about how the country should be governed. They did many things which, in the eyes of our people, were not good for the country. But we were quite helpless. Little by little, we came to understand what it was to lose freedom.

But many among us also realized that we had become a slave nation because we had a number of faults. We had an evil caste system which said that some people were born high and others were born so low that nothing could improve them. We regarded thousands as untouchables. The lot of our women was no better. Many of them were married when they were mere children. Very few people in the country were educated. Although the study of English had begun, millions of our people could not go to school because of caste rules and poverty.

Unless these unfortunate things were set right, there was no chance of our becoming strong again. Many great men of the period realized this and spent their lives fighting the worst of the social evils.

The first man who thought in this way became very famous because he brought about great changes in the way of people's thinking. He persuaded Indians to accept the good things of the West. This man was Raja Ram Mohun Roy.

Raja Ram Mohun Roy

Ram Mohun Roy was born in an old-fashioned Brahmin family of Bengal. He was married when he was still a child. He could not understand what was happening to him, but he did not dare say anything to his father. In his community it was the custom for children to be married very young.

Ram Mohun Roy's words made the British see Indians in a different light

Ram Mohun Roy was very clever at school. He learnt Persian, Sanskrit and Arabic. When he was twenty he began to learn English. He also studied the Vedas, the Upanishads, the Bible and the Quran. He felt that they all taught the same truths. He also disliked many customs of his time. He had special reason to hate the cruel custom of Sati. He had a sister whom he loved very much. Unfortunately her husband died. As was customary, she was burnt alive along with her husband's dead body. This dreadful thing happened before Ram Mohun Roy's own eyes. It changed his whole life. At this time, he had a good job under the British. He gave it up, and made up his mind to work for the imporvement of his own people. Then came a day when the Government declared Sati to be illegal. This was mostly because of the efforts of Ram Mohun Roy, who was never tired of speaking and writing on this subject. He raised his voice against many other evil practices. This made him unpopular, because most people were afraid of change and suspicious of anyone who had had an English education. Many times, Ram Mohun Roy had not a single friend left to support him. But this did not bother him.

One of Ram Mohun Roy's ambitions was to teach people to pray to God without any complicated rituals, or worship of idols. He started a new sect of Hinduism called the Brahmo Samaj. People from any caste could join the sect. The Brahmo Samaj did not allow any idols or pictures to be worshipped. Its followers were also forbidden to kill animals for sacrifice as was done at the famous temple of Kali in Calcutta.

Ram Mohun Roy was among the first Indians to go to England. He was sent by the Emperor of Delhi who also gave him the title of Raja. The orthodox Hindus thought they would lose their caste if they went overseas and ate with foreigners. Ram Mohun Roy did not value the opinion of such people, because he had gone to ask for certain rights for his countrymen. Indians were not given good official positions in their own country. He wanted to fight it out with those in power in England. He did not fight with a sword but with words of wisdom. His words made the British see Indians in a different light.

Ram Mohun Roy did not come back to India. When he had finished his work and was planning to return home, he was taken ill and he died in England.

Dayanand Saraswati

Many able and wise men came after Ram Mohun Roy. One was Dayanand Saraswati. He was born in Kathiawad, Like Ram Mohun Roy he also felt that God could not live in an idol "over which even mice could run". He too tried to make religion and worship simple. He started the Arya Samaj and many people joined him.

Ramakrishna Paramahamsa

Another great man was Ramakrishna Paramahamsa. He was born in Bengal. Although he was not learned, he was very wise. Even from his childhood he was pious. As he grew older he felt that he was always in the presence of God. He was a priest in a small temple near Cacutta and led a very simple life. He respected people of all castes and religions equally. Many times he ate with the outcastes. He believed that all religions taught the same truth. Like the ancient rishis of India he taught that 'God is one; learned men name him differently.' Although a Brahmin, he lived like a Muslim and a Christian at different times and fully understood the teaching of those religions. His life was so good and his teaching so noble that he was soon recognized as a saint.

Vivekananda

The saintly Ramakrishna had a large number of followers. Among them was a handsome and highly educated young man who became famous as Swami Vivekananda.

Vivekananda wanted his master's teaching to be known widely. He travelled all over India and went to many foreign countries also. He founded the Ramakrishna Mission, so that the Paramahamsa's disciples could work together. Vivekananda's speeches and writings did much to make Indians feel proud of their past. But he was unhappy that such a people had become so poor and ignorant. He wanted India to awake and arise, to be active and to

seek knowledge. The greatest religion, he taught, was to serve the poor people. Vivekananda did not live long. He was only thirty-nine years old when he passed away.

When you grow older you will read more about these remarkable men who first began to lead India in the new direction of social freedom. Along with them you must remember the names of Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar, Bankim Chandra Chatterji, Mahadev Govind Ranade, Keshab Chandra Sen and Syed Ahmed Khan.

Vivekananda taught that the greatest religion was to serve the poor

THE WILL TO BE FREE

The teachings of the great men you have just read about spread in India and many people began to think: "Can we not make our country, which has been known for its wealth and learning, once again strong, wise and free?"

The British thought themselves better than Indians. Most of them looked down upon our people. They refused to be tried by Indian judges, had special carriages in trains and did not allow Indians to mix with them as equals. Very few Indians were selected for the higher jobs in Government. The British did a hundred other things to show their sense of superiority. All this hurt our people deeply. But they were weak and afraid. Only a few had the courage to speak out in protest.

On the surface everything seemed to be calm, but underneath there was much restlessness. The foremost leaders of the country thought it was time to form an organization for telling the British what India felt. The organization they started was called the Indian National Congress. The first president of the Congress was Woomesh Chandra Bonnerji. It might interest you to know that the first secretary of the Congress was an Englishman called Allan Octavian Hume. He was one of the many Britons who truly loved India. He worked for its good, and believed that Indians should have more say in their own affairs.

The Congress demanded that less money should be spent on police and more on schools and hospitals. It insisted that the members of the local councils should be elected by the people and not appointed by the Government. They were convinced that India would always remain poor unless the decisions were taken by those whom the people trusted.

Dadabhai Naoroji

The most important leader of the Congress was Dadabhai Naoroji of

Bombay. He was greatly respected beause his thoughts were always for the country and never for himself. Through books and speeches he described how poor our country was. The cause of this poverty, he said, was foreign rule. He was so truthful and kindly a man that even Englishmen regarded him as a friend, and he was elected to the British Parliament. In Parliament he demanded that Indians should be given more power. The people of India whom he served for seventy years, loved him and called him the Grand Old Man. He lived to be 92 years of age, and became president of the Congress three times. It was he who declared, for the first time, that India's goal was Swarajya.

The people of India loved Dadabhai Naoroji and called him the Grand Old Man

Viceroys

We have seen that after the Government of India was taken over by the British sovereign, the Governor-General also beame the Viceroy. Normally a Viceroy remained in India for a term of five years. The first Viceroy was Lord Canning. All parts of India had by then come under the British. There was nothing more left for them to conquer inside the country.

There was hardly any fighting, except to guard the frontiers of the empire. As you know, most invaders of India had come through the Khyber Pass. The British wanted this Pass to be under their control. Since the Khyber Pass is in Afghanistan, the British wanted the ruler of Afghanistan to be under their control also. In this attempt, they fought three wars which are known as the Afghan Wars.

The Government was becoming stronger, but it was mainly run for the good of England. There were several famines and thousands of people died of hunger every year. To make matters worse, plague broke out as an eipidemic for the first time in India and spread over large parts of the country.

Ripon

Among the Viceroys, there were some who are remembered as good friends of India. Lord Ripon is one of them. He allowed Indians to have a voice in running their own towns and cities. He also did not like the idea that there should be special courts with English judges to try Englishmen in India and he wanted to stop this practice.

Another well-known Viceroy was Lord Curzon. He was greatly interested in India's ancient history and in historical monuments. But he became unpopular beause he split the province of Bengal into two. In one part there were more Muslims than Hindus and in the other more Hindus than Muslims. Most Bengalis did not like Bengal to be divided. They started a fight for a united Bengal. One of the ways in which they protested against the British was to boycott British goods. They told people to use only swadeshi things or things which were made in their own country. A leader of this fight was Aurobindo Ghose, who later beame a sannyasi.

The British later agreed that Lord Curzon was wrong, and Bengal was made one again. Another thing that happened at the time was that the capital of India was moved from Calcutta to Delhi, which had been the capital of kings for hundreds of years.

Reforms

The British also had to give in to the Indian demand that the people of the country should have more say in the Government. More Indians could now go into the legislative assemblies of the various provinces. These new concessions were called the Minto-Morley Reforms because they were drawn up by Lord Minto, who was then the Viceroy, and Lord Morley, who was the British Secretary in charge of Indian affairs. Many people in the Congress, however, thought that these reforms did not go far enough. In order to get real self-government, they felt, requests and appeals would not do, and some vigorous action would have to be taken. The most famous of these men who wanted firm action was Bal Gangadhar Tilak.

TWO MEN FROM POONA

Tilak and Gokhale

Even as a child Bal Gangadhar Tilak had little patience when he was given a sum to do in class, he used to shout out the answer at once. This habit annoyed his teachers, but secretly they were proud of his quick mind and cleverness. He was bright, truthful and loyal to his friends. Many times he was scolded for things he had not done, but he never gave away his friends and classmates.

Tilak grew up to be a great scholar. He knew Sanskrit very well and was a good mathematician. But most of all he loved his country. He joined the Congress and decided that he would not rest until India was free.

At the same time, there was another equally learned man called Gopal Krishna Gokhale who also deeply loved his country. As a child he once rode to one of the Congress meetings on the rearboard of the horse carriage in which Dadabhai Naoroji was travelling. Like Tilak, he also wanted to see India happy and the two became great friends. They both lived in Poona. They taught in the same college and used to discuss things as they strolled about on the banks of a river near their college. Although they were close friends they disagreed on the ways in which India could get her freedom. Tilak was impatient and wanted action. Gokhale advised patience. He

"Swarajya is my birthright and I will have it", said Bal Gangadhar Tilak

believed that the British could be persuaded to see the Indian point of view, and that it was not necessary to fight them.

Some people agreed with Tilak, others with Gokhale. The Congress was divided into two groups, both wanting the same thing but believing in different ways of getting it. With Tilak were Lala Lajpat Rai and Bipin Chandra Pal. They were popularly called the Lal-Bal-Pal group. Dadabhai Naoroji, Pherozeshah Mehta, Surendranath Bannerjea and Gokhale were in the other group. You must know the names of all these people, because they were all great patriots, however different their ways.

Tilak was among the first to demand that India must be free. "Swarajya is my birthright, and I will have it", he said. He was a fiery speaker and thousands of people who heard him demanded Swarajya. Tilak was put in jail many times for this. But he never once cared for himself. He ran a journal called "Kesari" through which he spoke to the whole country.

Tilak did hot believe that a handful of men, however wise, could do much. He set himself the task of rousing masses of people to action. In his own town, he started the Shivaji festival, at which great number of people gathered and recalled the brave deeds of the heroic Shivaji. He also started the practice of celebrating Ganesh Puja on a mass scale. These celebrations went on for many days and thousands of people attended them. At these gatherings learned men and political leaders told the common people about the past greatness of the country and of the need to be free once again.

Tilak was once sentenced to six years' imprisonment for preaching that the British should go. The British were afraid to let him remain in India, even though he was in jail, and they sent him to Burma. The hard life in jail broke his health and made him a weak, old man; but nothing could break his spirit. He had to live absolutely alone in a cell for six years in Burma. He was not even allowed to see his friends. But he had his books which had always been his close friends. While he was in jail, he wrote a very fine book called Gita Rahasya. It explains the teachings of the Bhagavad Gita. Tilak is remembered as much for this book as for his heroic fight for freedom.

Gokhale was quite a different type of man from Tilak. He believed in quiet action. He founded a body called the Servants of India Society. Only people who vowed to devote their whole lives to social reform could join this society. Gokhale was a great patriot and wanted freedom as much as anyone

else, but he felt that we should first make ourselves fit to receive freedom. We should, he said, educate our people and improve the state of our society.

Gandhiji had something interesting to say about Tilak and Gokhale. He said that meeting Gokhale was like having a dip in the Ganga while Tilak was like the ocean.

TEACHERS AND BUILDERS

Rabindranath Tagore

All of you know our national anthem, Jana gana mana. How many of you know who wrote it? It was written by a great poet called Rabindranath Tagore. Rabindranath was born in Calcutta. His father, Devendranath, was a wealthy and very wise man. People respected him gratly and called him Maharshi. Rabindranath was not only a poet but also a man of vast learning and goodness. The whole country respected him and called him Gurudev.

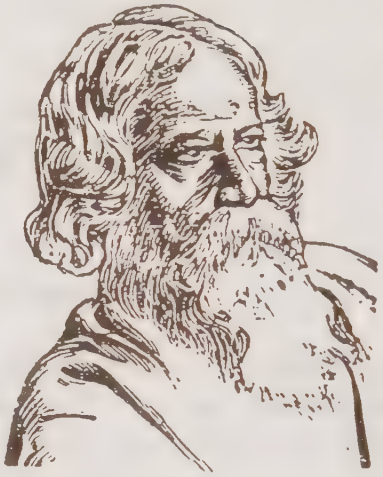
Rabindranath started writing poetry when he was a very young boy. What he wrote was so beautiful that well-known writers of the day were full of admiration for him. One of the them the famous novelist, Bankim Chandra Chatterji, once took a garland that had been put round his neck and gave it to Rabindranath. He said that it was more fitting that Rabindranath, the rising sun, should wear the garland. Rabindranath was only a boy when this happened.

Besides poetry Rabindranath wrote plays, dance-dramas, stories, novels and thoughtful books in Bengali and English. He was a great lover of all the arts. He wrote numerous songs, composed music for them, and sang them in his melodious voice. In later years, he also became a painter.

What kind of thoughts did this great man have? Earlier you have read about many great writers and thinkers who wanted our people to change for the better, to shake off their laziness and make their country as great as it had been. Tagore came after these thinkers, but he expressed his thoughts with such force and beauty in his writings that the whole country felt a new wave of enthusiasm. Tagore's books were translated in all the Indian languages and began to be read in all parts of the country. Thousands of people became his followers.

His fame spread all over the world. Through his beautiful poetry people in other countries became aware of the richness of India's mind. A famous prize which is given to the world's outstanding authors and scientists, the Nobel Prize, was awarded to Rabindranath Tagore.

Tagore wanted India to become great, but he believed that India could not become great by herself. He was convinced that India should take what is best from other countries also. He wanted people to love not merely their own countrymen but all mankind. That is why he is called an internationalist.



Tagore wanted people to love not only their own countrymen but all mankind

Tagore was not satisfied only with writing songs and books. He built a university at Santiniketan where fine arts and other subjects were taught in the way he thought was best suited to India. Tagore also believed that our villages should be cleaner, better and happier. He built another institution, Sriniketan to work for village uplift.

Rabindranath Tagore lived to be eighty-one years old. He was a sage, and looked a sage, with his majestic figure and his flowing silvery beard. Gandhi was very fond of him, and the two regarded each other as brothers.

Muhammad Iqbal

Another famous poet who sang of the greatness of India was Muhammad Iqbal. He wrote in Urdu and Persian. Many of you must know his famous Urdu song, "Sare jahan se acchha Hindustan hamara", which means, "Fairer far than all the world is Hindustan, this land of ours."

Subramania Bharati

There was a fiery young Tamil poet, who inspired millions of people with poems and songs about freedom and his intense love for the motherland. He is known as Subramania Bharati. He, too, longed for the

day when India would once again be happy and prosperous. His beautiful patriotic poems impressed people so much that he was given the title of 'Bharati' when he was only eleven years old.

This great poet met a tragic death. A temple elephant seized him with its trunk and threw him on the ground. Although he was rescued immediately, he never recovered from the shock of the accident, and died when he had not even reached the age of forty.

Madan Mohan Malaviya

You have alredy seen that in the year of the Great Revolt, three universities were started in India. In course of time more universities were set up. There was a well-known scholar who believed that the only way in which the nation could stand on its own feet again was through education. This man was Madan Mohan Malaviya. He collected lakhs of rupees and with this money he founded the Benaras Hindu University. Madan Mohan Malaviya was a great patriot and became the president of the Congress.

Annie Besant

One of the people who helped Madan Mohan Malaviya set up the Benaras Hindu University was Annie Besant. Although born in Britain, Annie Besant made India her home. She read all the religious books of our ancient sages. She said that there was good in every religion, and the best should be taken from all religions. The faith which Annie Besant practised is called theosophy. Theosophy influened a large number of Indian leaders of her time.

Annie Besant felt that the British had been unjust to India and she demanded that India should rule itself. For such beliefs she was even put in jail. Annie Besant also became a president of the Congress. She died in India at the age of 87.

Jagadish Chandra Bose

You have heard of many leaders, writers and educationists. But a country cannot progress very far without scientists. One of our famous scientists was Jagadish Chandra Bose. He was three years older than

Tagore, and like Taogre he was respected all over the country. Jagadish Chandra Bose was a scholar in physics, and did much work on the wireless. Later he came to be greatly interested in plant life. He made the discovery that plants not only needed food, sunlight and air, like all human beings, but that they also had feelings just like people.

P.C. Ray

Another famous scientist of modern India was P.C. Ray. His special subject was chemistry. He is remembered for the research work he did and for his great love for his country. You have heard of the swadeshi movement. P.C. Ray taught that we should only use things made in India.

Two other famous Indian scientists also won fame all over the world—Ramanujan and C.V. Raman.

Ramanujan

Ramanujan never passed any university examination. He was only a clerk in an office, but he was a brilliant mathematician. He could solve sums which even the leading professors of the world could not. His genius came to be recognized and a British university invited him. Ramanujan was in poor health. He died soon after going to England. He was still a young man when he passed away.

C.V. Raman

C.V. Raman is another famous name in science. He started life as an accounts officer in Government service but soon gave up his job to devote himself to physics. He taught first in Calcutta, and then in Bangalore. C.V. Raman also won the Nobel Prize, the second Indian to do so. He had a laboratory of his own where he used to work for long hours everyday.

Jamshedji Tata

A country becomes great only if its people learn more and do more. The national leaders thought that just as we needed more colleges, we also needed more factories. It was not right to depend on foreign countries for the goods that we wanted. By making them within India our people could get

jobs and our money would stay within the country. One of the most famous people who set up mills and factories was Jamshedji Tata. He wanted India to produce steel and it is because of his efforts that we now have the great steel mill at Jamshedpur.

These poets, scholars, scientists and builders gave our people pride and hope. India had been great in the past and she could be great again if her people were prepared to learn and work. All these great people helped us to become a free nation.

GANDHI THE MAHATMA

None of you may have seen him. But all of you have heard of him. He was a simple man, a man with no lands and no money. He did not even wear enough clothes to cover his whole body. And yet he had more strength and more power in the world than the greatest of emperors. His was the strength of goodness and of faith such as we read about in stories of our gods and saints and heores. And yet this man lived in our own times. Einstein, the famous scientist, said of him that "in a thousand years the world would find it difficult to believe that such a man ever walked on earth".

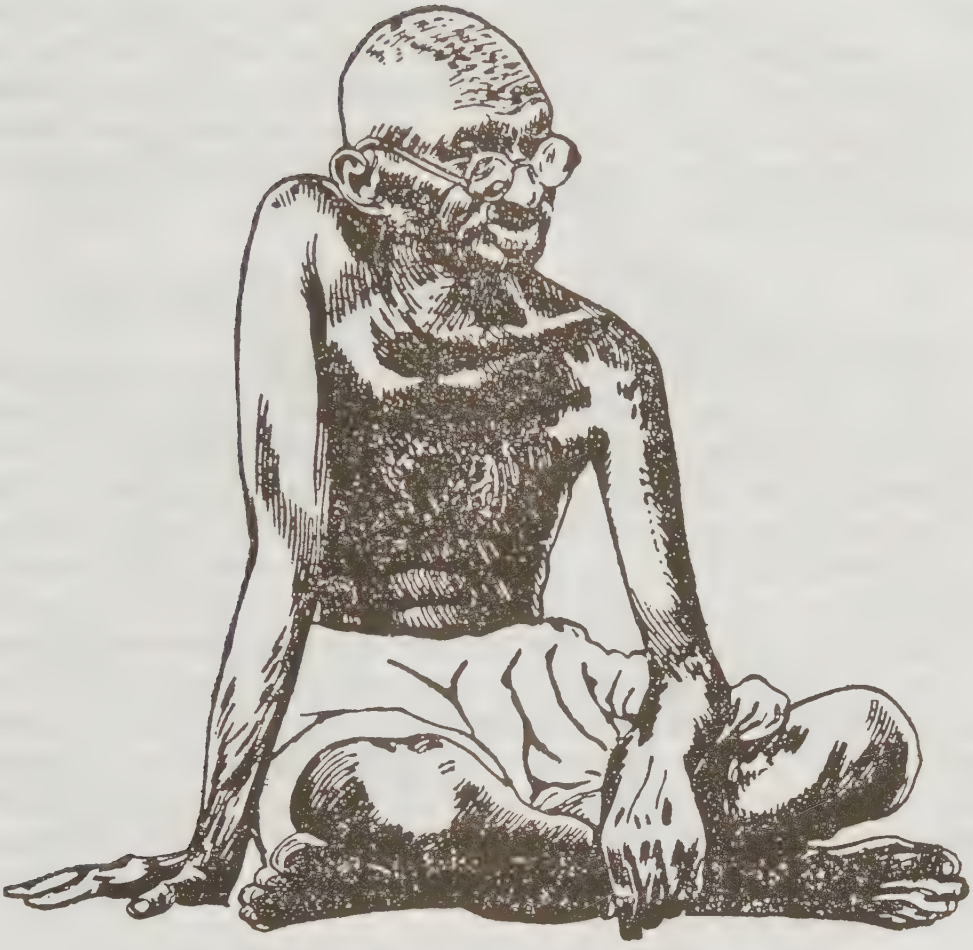
What did Gandhi do for us?

If we belong to a free country we owe it largely to him. If we are proud of our nation it is mostly because of him. If Harijan children today go to school like all other children and are not treated as untouchables, we owe it to Gandhi. Grown-ups say that he made men out of dust, that he gave us courage and that he taught us always to be a little better than we were. That is why he is called the Father of the Nation, and the story of his life is really the story of our people.

Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi was born at Porbandar in Kathiawad. Though his father was the Dewan of a State, he was a very ordinary child. Like most other children, he went to school and just managed to pass his examinations. When he was nineteen years old, he went to England, where he became a barrister. He did not start off as a particularly good lawyer. When he went to plead his first case he got so nervous that he could hardly speak.

In South Africa

When he was only twenty-four, he went to South Africa in connection with a legal case. There he was shocked to see that dark-skinned people,



Gandhiji taught us always to be a little better than we were

Indians and Africans, were treated almost like animals by the European settlers. They were not allowed to walk on the same pavements as the white people, or travel in the same coaches. If they did, they were insulted or beaten and even jailed. Gandhi had to suffer many such insults. He decided to stay on in South Africa to help people to get fair treatment. He fought for this for twenty years and in the end was able to do something for his people. The way he fought was something quite new. It was not at all like the fighting that you have read about so far.

Gandhi believed that there is always a peaceful way of doing things, and if one had to fight and hurt people to get something, that thing was not

worth having at all. If he thought a law was unfair, he believed it his duty to break it and accept cheerfully any punishment he was given without hatred for the person who inflicted it. This way of fighting, without violence, for what one believed to be right, Gandhi called Satyagraha. Satyagraha means insistence on truth. To Gandhi, Satya or truth and Ahimsa or non-violene were the most important things in life. He once said, "If I am a follower of Ahimsa, I must love my enemy."

Return to India

After his great good work in South Africa, Gandhi came back to India. At that time, a war began in Europe between Germany on the one side and Britain, France, Russia and some other nations on the other. Britain wanted help from India and promised that Indians would get more rights when the war was over. Gandhi trusted this promise because he thought that one should always trust people. He helped in recruiting soldiers for the army. When the war was won, the British announced a few reforms, called Montagu-Chelmsford reforms, after the men who were Secretary of State and Viceroy. These reforms were so half-hearted that it became clear that the British had no desire to give Indians power to rule themselves. There was great resentment all over the country. The people who appeared to be very meek and mild seemed suddenly to wake up and speak out what they felt. Meetings and processions were held in many parts of the country to demand self-government. The police broke up the processions. Many people were hurt. Thousands were arrested.

Jallianwala Bagh

At a place called Jallianwala Bagh in Amritsar thousands of people had gathered to hear their leaders. Naturally, they had no guns or weapons of any sort with them. Suddenly an English general turned up with soldiers. He posted himself at the gate of the park and ordered his men to open fire. There was no way of escape. About one thousand were killed and many more wounded. As though this was not enough, the British officers gave orders that all Indians passing through a certain street had to crawl on their bellies.

The shooting down of Indians at Jallianwala Bagh shocked the whole country

Followers of Gandhi

The butchery at Jallianwala Bagh shocked the whole country. The poet Tagore returned in protest the honour and title the British had given him. Gandhi and other national leaders called to the people to come forward and join them in the fight against injustice. Thousands of men and women answered Gandhi's call. Young men left schools and colleges, lawyers gave up their work, and many resigned Government jobs to follow him. Most of our leaders of yesterday and today were among those followers—Motilal Nehru with his son Jawaharlal Nehru, Chittaranjan Das, Rajendra Prasad,

Maulana Abul Kalam Azad, C. Rajagopalachari, Sarojini Naidu, Abdul Ghaffar Khan, Sardar Patel, Ajmal Khan, Dr. Ansari, Jamnalal Bajaj and Baba Kharak Singh. Most of these leaders are no more today. They defied laws and refused to buy or use anything that was British. They were arrested and put in jail again and again. They suffered great hardships, but as soon as they were released they acted exactly as before. In towns and villages, Indian crowds were beaten up by the police with lathis. But the crowds did not hit back, for Gandhi had taught the people that that was not the way to fight.

Once, however, in a village called Chauri Chaura, people became angry with the policemen and set fire to a police station. This pained Gandhi so much that he stopped the Satyagraha at once. To him, getting freedom was not the only important thing. The way of getting it was just as important. He wanted us to fight for freedom in a clean and pure way without violence. Violence, he said, always led to more violence.

He wanted to put an end to British rule in India, but he did not want the British people to be hurt. Freedom, he said, should be won in a way which would make both Indians and Britons better people.

Gandhi said that it was not really the British who made us slaves but we ourselves and some of our own customs. One of our worst customs was untouchability. Millions of our people were looked down upon and considered unfit even to be touched. They were not allowed to mix with other people. They could not pray in the same temples. They could not send their children to the same schools; they could not even draw drinking water from the same well. This was a disgrace to the nation. Gandhi loved the untouchables so much that he called them Harijans, the people of God.

To him, there well-being was dearer than his own life. Once he went on fast to persuade the people to give moe rights to Harijans. He did not touch any food for many days, and ate only when he was satisfied that they would be treated better. He spent a great deal of his time working for them. He fought to get them the right to enter temples, and mix with others as equals.

Apart from untouchability, Gandhi found poverty, unhappiness and ignorance in the country. In their ignorance, Hindus and Muslims were sometimes unkind to each other. Gandhi believed that all religions were really the same and that Allah of the Mussalmans and Ishwara of the Hindus were just two names of the same God. He was filled with sadness when

Hindus and Muslims fought each other just because their religions happened to be different. Many times he went on fast when rioting broke out between the two communities.

Gandhi's heart was always with the peasants, the labourers and all the poor people. Throughout his life he thought of them in everything he did.

He taught the people to rely on themselves. He asked them to spin yarn on the charkha and wear only khadi. This helped the villagers and millions of poor weavers. At the same time it gave our own people the money spent on buying foreign cloth. Gandhi felt that by doing what the poor had to do every day, one came closer to them. "I cannot imagine better worship of God than that in His name I should labour for the poor even as they do," he said. Gandhi also taught the people that to labour with one's hands was nothing to be ashamed of, and that it was the only way a human being could have dignity. All his life he lived and ate in the simplest possible way. Many people were attracted by the simple way he lived, and followed him to the ashrams he had set up at Sabarmati, Sevagram and other places.

On January 26, 1930, the people India, led by Gandhiji and Jawaharlal Nehru, took the pledge that they would no rest until the country won complete freedom. It was on this day, twenty years later, that India became a Republic.

The Dandi March

Soon after the pledge of freedom was taken, Gandhi asked the British to give what India asked. The British were not ready to do so. Gandhi decided to start another Satyagraha. You already know that Gandhi believed in breaking laws that were unjust. He believed that it was wrong to tax salt which even the poorest people use. He, therefore, made up his mind to break this unfair law and informed the Viceroy that he was going to do so. Followed by seventy-eight men and women, amongst whom was Vinoba Bhave, he marched for twenty-four days from his ashram to the sea beach at Dandi, near Ahmedabad. There he prepared some salt from the sea-water in order to proclaim that the poor could make their own salt without paying a tax. And so a law was broken. Thousands of men and women, in cities and villages, repeated Gandhi's example. They were put in prison, beaten with lathis and shot at. In a few weeks the jails of India were full and more had to be built.

Round Table Conferences

The British Government now began to feel that they would have to talk to Indians in a more understanding way. They arranged three conferences in London. These were called the Round Table Conferences and many eminent Indians were called to attend them. The Congress at first refused to take part in these talks. Gandhi went to the second conference as the sole spokesman of the Congress. When he was there, the Congress felt, what need was there for anybody else? He went in his simple dhoti and wooden sandals. He told the English people: "Most of my countrymen cannot afford to dress any better than this and it is as the representative of my people that I sit here." The conferences in London were not very helpful. All that the British finally agreed to was to let each province of India have a Government elected by the people with the British still having a say in all important matters.

"Quit India"

A few years after this came the Second World War. Britain was at war with Germany. Without consulting the Indian leaders, Britain declared that India was also at war with Germany. The people of India protested. The popular Governments in the provinces, which were being run for about two years by the Congress, resigned. Gandhi waited for a change of heart in the British. Finally he asked them to "Quit India." It became the solgan of the whole country.

Before a new Satyagraha could be launched, the British arrested Gandhi, Jawaharlal Nehru, Sardar Patel, Maulana Azad, Rajendra Prasad and other leaders. This made the people very angry. There were protests all over the country, but the Government put down the people sternly. Much blood was shed and many thousands of people were thrown in prison without trial.

A little earlier, another of the leaders of our freedom movement, Subhas Chandra Bose, escaped from the country with the aim of fighting the British from outside. He led an army which was mainly built up of Indian prisoners of war who were abroad. This army was called the Indian National Army. At that time Germany and Japan were at war with Britain. The Indian National Army also fought against British forces. Subhas Bose, who is affectionately called Netaji, is remembered as one of the bravest heroes of India.

A sad thing which happened during this time was that many Muslims in India began to think of themselves as separate people. The leader of the Muslim League, Muhammad Ali Jinnha, wanted a separate state for Muslims which was to be called Pakistan.

At last, the war came to an end. Right-thinking Englishmen realized that they could not cling to India much longer. The time had come when Indians would rule themselves. The British set free the leaders who were in prison. Gandhi had been released a year earlier. The Congress and the Muslim League were invited by the Viceroy to form a Government for the whole of India. Jawaharlal Nehru and other leaders took office on behalf of the Congress. A little later, leaders of the Muslim Leauge also joined the Government. But this did not work out well. Jinnah and members of the Muslim League wanted many parts of India to be carved out and formed into Pakistan. But the Congress wanted India to remain one. There was much rioting in the country.

Noakhali

Gandhi left all his other work and went to a place called Noakhali in East Bengal, where a riot had broken out and where most people were Muslims. He knew quite well that in the midst of such madness and hatred, he might be killed. But he refused to have policemen to protect him. He went on his bare feet to many other villages praying that God should purify the hearts of both Hindus and Muslims. "If you become mad again, you must destory me first", he told the villagers. But Gandhi's was a lone voice in a wilderness of hate and vilence. Riots broke out in Bihar where there were more Hindus than Muslims, and then in the Punjab where there were more Muslims than Hindus or Sikhs.

People forgot that their fight was with the British and that the most important thing was to win freedom. They began fighting with each other. Those who wanted a separate State for themselves in the shape of Pakistan fought with others who wanted India to remain undivided. Rioting went on for many months. At last the British decided to give up their rule over India, but when they left there would not be a united India but two separate countries. The leaders of the country finally agreed to the creation of Pakistan. The partition of the country, they thought, was less of an evil than the death of thousands of people.

Gandhi The Man

There was something in Gandhi which made him a leader wherever he went. What were the qualities that made Gandhi such a great man? They were truth, courage, a promptness in action and a neatness of mind. Whatever he thought right he carried out in action, no matter how difficult it might be. He had unlimited courage. Gandhi became great by doing things, not just by telling others what to do. He never expected others to do what he could not do himself. And in everything he did, he was guided by truth, love and cleanliness.

To Gandhi, truth was the most important thing on earth. His search for truth never ended. There was always more to be known, more to be done, and done better than it had been done before. Life itself was a great experiment for Gandhi. As you know, an experiment is something from which you can find out more. Gandhi wrote the story of his life, and he called this book "The Story of My Experiments with Truth".

Perhaps you think that a great man who did so many important things for us must have been a very serious kind of person. But Gandhi loved laughter. He liked to play with children. He was full of jokes about himself. One of his friends used to call him Mickey Mouse because of his big ears. He was a man with a gentle touch, a man whom the sick always wanted at their bedside.

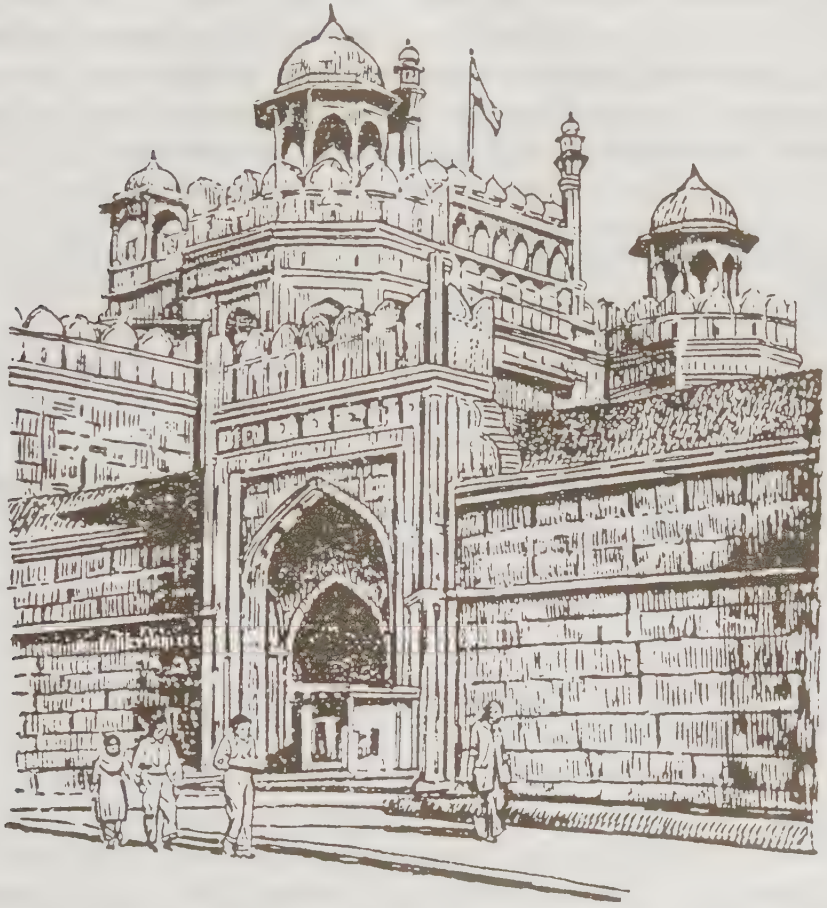
Gandhi was against the idea of owning a lot of things. All he possessed could be made up into just one small bundle. "We are thieves in a way," he said. "If I take anything that I do not need for my own immediate use, I theive it from somebody else."

Gandhi said, "We should be ashamed of resting or having a square meal so long as there is one able-bodied man or woman without work or food." He always wanted to be with the poor people. In trains he travelled economy class, and he liked to labour as the poor do.

Freedom

The India which became free was not the India of Gandhi's dreams. Part of it had become Pakistan, as Jinnah and his Muslim League had wanted. On the midnight of August 14, 1947, Lord Louis Mountbatten, the

last of the Viceroys, handed over the reins of Government on behalf of the British Crown. The Indian national flag flew over the Red Fort at Delhi for the first time. Though there was unhappiness at the time because of the riots, we must remember that we had won our fight for freedom without weapons but with truth and non-violence. Such a thing had never happened before in the history of any country.



The Indian national flag flew over the Red Fort at Delhi for the first time

When India became free, the people sang and danced in joy and sent up fireworks and rockets in the sky. The whole country was jubilant, but Gandhi who had made freedom possible, was sad because his beloved country had been cut up in two and because thousands had been killed and millions made homeless refugees. While free India celebrated Independence

Day, Gandhi was far away in Bengal among the poor victims, trying to wipe the tears from their eyes, praying and fasting to atone for the sins of both Hindus and Muslims.

The Martyrdom

Some people who were full of hate against the Muslims were angry with Gandhi for caring as much for them as for the Hindus. When riots started in Delhi, Gandhi began a fast and gave it up only when peace was restored in the city. This made those who hated the Muslims angrier and they wanted to take revenge. One evening when Gandhi was going to say his prayers, a pistol shot suddenly rang out. It was followed by two more. Gandhi just said, "Hey Ram, Hey Ram", folded his hands in prayer and fell. The whole nation was plunged in grief. They could hardly believe that one whom they affectionately called Bapu, and on whom they relied as much as little children rely on their father, was not with them any more.

Jawaharlal Nehru, our leader and Prime Minister, told the nation, "The light has gone out of our lives and there is darkness everywhere." But he went on to say, "And yet I am wrong, for the light that shone in this country was no ordinary light. It will illumine this country for many more years and a thousand years later it will still be seen in this country."

FIRST YEARS OF FREEDOM

When India became free, millions of people poured into our country from the area which became Pakistan. They left their lands, homes and all other belongings behind. A great number of people who had wanted Pakistan to be formed went away from India to make their homes in the new country.

The most urgent thing that India had to do was to take care of the refugees who had come in millions. They had to be fed, given jobs and helped to start life again. The property the Muslim left in India was less than half of that left by the refugees who came from Pakistan. This sudden arrival of millions of men, women and children who had to be cared for put a great strain on the country.

No other country of the world has had more displaced persons to look after than our. Our Government managed to give most of them lands, homes and jobs. The settlement of these people was one of the greatest achievements of our Government.

The Princely States

At the time India became independent there were nearly 600 States ruled by Rajas, Maharajas and Nawabs under the protection of the British. Some of the States were very big, like Hyderabad and Kashmir. Others were tiny estates of just a few square kilometres. Most of the princes of these States lived in great luxury in huge palaces with fleets of car, while their subjects had hardly enough to eat.

In free India, there was no place for these States because the country could not remain cut up into little bits and pieces. The great work of taking over these States, and bringing them up to the same level as the rest of India, was done by Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel. He was a close follower of

Gandhi and first won fame by leading a Satyagraha of peasants in Bardoli in Gujarat. When India became free Sardar Patel became the Deputy Prime Minister.

Becoming a part of India meant that the princes would have to give up their grand way of living. Many of them did not like this. Sardar Patel talked to them with understanding and friendliness, but was absolutely firm. He told them they could not stay as they were. In a little less than two years, all the States within India became part of free India. On the whole there was no bitterness or fighting.

INDIA TODAY

Soon after becoming free, we gave ourselves a Constitution. The Constitution lists the freedoms that are guaranteed to every Indian, and lays down the way in which the country is to be governed. The Constitution came into force in 1950 on January 26, the day we celebrate each year as Republic Day.

By this Constitution we are a parliamentary democracy. In a parliamentary democracy, the people choose their spokesmen who sit together in what is called 'Parliament' and pass laws for the country. This is a great thing for a country which has often been oppressed by kings and foreign rulers. Now we elect our own President.

We have a Central Government with a Prime Minister who is responsible to Parliament. Each State has a State Government, with a Governor and a Chief Minister, and a Legislature which is somewhat like a small Parliament.

In India everyone above the age of eighteen has the right to vote, and so has a say in choosing members of Parliament and the Government. This is normally done every five years when the General Elections are held. We have had eleven such elections so far. Nowhere in the world do so many people vote together. That is why India is called the largest democracy in the world.

Our Prime Minster for seventeen years after freedom was Jawaharlal Nehru. Mahatma Gandhi loved him as a son. "He will gladly kiss the gallows for the sake of motherland", he once said of Jawaharlal. Jawaharlal Nehru was born in a rich family. He went to the best schools in England. His father Motilal Nehru was a famous lawyer. Jawaharlal also studied law so that he could work with his father. He was still a young man when Gandhi came back to India and called on the people to give up everything and fight for their rights. Both Jawaharlal Nehru and his father Motilal gave up their practice, their comfortable house and their riches, to follow Gandhi.

Jawaharlal had to spend long, lonely years in prison. He spent hours in reading and writing books. His autobiography which tells of the freedom movement and of himself was written in jail. The letters he wrote from prison to his growing daughter became a book called "Glimpses of World History". Another famous book of Nehru is "The Discovery of India."

Nehru passed away in 1964. But we still remember him as one who cared deeply for the people of this country and did a lot for India's progress. Like Mahatma Gandhi, he also was of the opinion that it was not enough to be free from foreign rule. The people had also to be free from poverty and want so that they could live better and contribute their share to the growth of the country. But this was not easy to achieve because years of neglect had made India a very poor country. It was important, therefore, not only to see that more things were produced in the country, but also to see that people had money to but these things. In other words, it was necessary to plan how to pull India out of the rut of poverty and misery into which she had fallen.

Long before independence, Nehru and a group of intelligent people had sat together and studied what India's needs were and how they could be met. Naturally this work could be done much better when we were free. The first things we did after freedom were to look after the refugees, solve the problem of the States, and draft a Constitution for ourselves. After this, it was time to see that more food and goods were produced in this country. A Planning Commission was set up. It drew up a rough Plan for five years, which was discussed by the people and then made final.

We have so far had Eight Five-Year Plans. A lot has been done during these years of planning. In the First Plan, we built many dams across the rivers. Bhakra, Tungabhadra, Hirakud are some of them. Because of these dams, more fields are getting water and more electricity is being produced.

In the Second Plan, several big factories were set up. Of these, the steel factories at Bhilai, Durgapur and Rourkela are the most important.

The Third Five-Year Plan tried to grow more food and produce more of the things our people needed in their day-to-day lives.

In the Fourth Plan we set up many fertilizer plants to step up our efforts to grow more food. The big fertilizer plants are at Gorakhpur, Namrup, Kota, Cochin and Madras. Big oil refineries were also set up at Madras, Haldia, and some other places.

During the period of the Fifth Plan, there was an oil crisis in the world. We had to pay a lot of money to buy oil from other countries for our needs. Therefore in the Fifth Plan, we tried for the first time to take out oil from the sea, in an area near Bombay. If you go there, you can see the big drilling machines for yourself. A ship called Sagar Samrat is equipped with the latest type of drilling machines.

The Sixth Plan tried to raise the standard of living of the poor and to make sure that we depended more and more on ourselves and less and less on other countries for all the things that our people needed.

We are now in the end of the Eighth Plan. The main aims of this are to control the growth in the numbers of people, to see that there are more jobs, and most importantly to make the country's economy so strong that it can complete with other countries. Other important achievements in this field have been the launching of Bhaskar in 1979, of the Rohini satellite in 1981, of the Ariane Passenger Payload Experiment in 1981 and of the Indian National satellite in 1982.

For nearly two hundred years, the important nations of the world took no notice of a poor and backward country like India. In many ways India is still poor and backward. But, today, her voice is heard everywhere and commands respect. Jawaharlal Nehru had a great role to play in this. Even when he worked to free India from British rule, he thought of the other backward countries of Asia and Africa who were being oppressed by the other powerful nations of the world. India has always tried to help them in their fight for justice and freedom. Our Government lent its support to Nelson Mandela who was fighting for the oppressed people of South Africa when a handful of white people were treating the majority of black people badly in their own homeland.

In the world of today, a nation cannot make progress all by itself. Unless there is peace in the world, no nation can have progress and happiness. India believes that the countries of the world can understand each other better and learn to live peacefully if they follow the principles of tolerance and friendliness taught by Buddha, Gandhi and other great men of the world.

We shall stop this story here. But there is no end to the story of India. It will go on as long as this earth of ours is here, and your children, and your children's children and their children will still not know the end of it.

THINKING ABOUT DATES

The story you have just read is full of things that happened. Do you know when these things happened? For instance, when was Emperor Ashoka crowned? If you ask your teacher or your mother or father they will look into a book and give you a date for an answer. History books are full of dates. But you must have often wondered what these dates really mean.

Think of time as a long line—so long that you cannot imagine where it begins and where it ends. If you mark this line with a dot at any place, that place will be a point in time. And that is all a date is—a point in time. When you write a letter, you put a date on it which includes the year, the month and the day. The person who reads your letter knows exactly when you wrote it and how many days it has taken to reach him. But here we shall not talk about months and days. We shall talk only of years.

You all have a date of birth. If you say that you were born in the year 1982 we know at once that you are fifteen years old, because now the year is 1997 and fifteen years have passed since your birth in 1982.

Now, what does 1982 mean? It is an important date, because many of you may have been born in 1982. We can also say that you were born nineteen hundred and eighty-two years after the birth of Jesus Christ. You must have seen the letter B.C. or A.C. written along with the dates in history books. The letters B.C. stand for the time before the birth of Christ and the letters A.C. for the time after his birth. A.C. is also written as A.D. which stands for *anno domini*. These are Latin words for "in the year of our Lord". In other words, A.C. and A.D. mean exactly the same thing. In the year 5 A.D., Jesus Christ was five years old.

If you know that Alexander came to India in 326 B.C. can you tell how many years ago he really came? Let us go back nineteen hundred and ninety-seven years. We shall come to the time that Christ was born. Let us keep going back along the line of time until we come to three hundred and

twenty-six years before he was born. So counting from now Alexander came nineteen hundred and ninty-seven plus three hundred and twenty-six years ago. Surely, this is a very easy sum for you. The answer is: Alexander came to India two thousand three hundred and twenty three years ago!

What is the use of learning dates? You must have said this to yourself many times, especially if you find it difficult to remember dates! But dates can be lots of fun. They some times tell you very interesting things. Now, you have all heard of the Rani of Jhansi. She rode out to fight her last battle in 1858. If you know her date of birth you can find out at once how old she was at this time. She was 23 years old, because she was born in 1835. Could your great-grandfather have seen the Rani of Jhansi if he had a chance? You can easily tell. All you have to do is to ask your father when your great-grandfather was born. From this you can calculate whether he was a baby or a young boy at that time or whether he was born at all.

Dates in history are calculated in relation to some very important persons or events. In the countries of the West, dates were reckoned from the time of Jesus Christ. This was called the Christian era, and it came to be used in most parts of the world. It was introduced in our country by the British and we still use it.

India has many calendars which have been used from very early times. Some of these are the Vikrama Samvat, the Kalpa and the Kaliyuga calendars. Three are many more. Altogether, more than thirty are still used. One difficulty about having so many calendars is that the same date falls on different days according to each. You can imagine how confusing this can be especially when the whole country wants to celebrate a festival! People began to feel that we should use the same calendar all over the country. A few years ago, the Government decided to adopt one of the Indian calendars. They chose what is called the Saka era. It was chosen because it is one of the most ancient and most scientific systems of calendar making. It was started by an ancient king of India who belonged to the Saka tribe. The Saka calendar is Seventy-eight years behind the Christian calendar. August 15, 1996 A.D. according to the Christian era was Shravana 24, 1918 according to the Saka era.

There is another important calendar, which is used by many Muslim countries and by Muslim holy men. This is called the Hijra calendar. The

important event from which all dates are calculated in this era is the journey of the Prophet Muhammad from Mecca to Medina.

Now that you know what a date is, it might interest you to look at some dates in the long story of India which you have just read.

THE LINE OF TIME

Look at the folded chart at the end. You will see the long, imaginary line of time. Along this line, some events and personalities in Indian history have been drawn. The chart only tells you in what order they came.

If you want to know what these pictures stand for, look at the number of the picture in the chart and compare it with the same number in the list of dates given at the end of this book. It will tell you what the event was and when it happened according to the Christian calendar. You need not learn these dates by heart. If you look at them sometimes, you will know the story of India a little better than you do.

The first picture is that of the Aryans. Although they began to come to India thousands of years before Christ was born, in the chart they are shown only a few inches away from the picture of Christ. If they had been shown as far away as they really were, the line of time would have had to be so long that it would have gone right out of this book! And a thousand years before the Aryans, there were the people of the Indus Valley, and thousands of years before them there must have been other people. To get all these people into this line of time you have to imagine it stretching to your left along your extended arm and even beyond it.

Besides these dates, there are many more which every grown-up Indian should know. When you grow up, you can learn much more about Indian history on your own.

DATES IN THE LINE OF TIME

1.	The Aryans begin to come to India	about 2500 B.C.
2.	Gautama Buddha is born	about 623 B.C.
3.	Ashoka begins his reign	273 B.C.
4.	Jesus Christ is born	The Christian era begins
5.	Samudragupta comes to the throne	about 320 A.D.
6.	Harshavardhana meets Yuan Chwang	643 A.D.
7.	A Pallava king (Narasimhavarman Mahamalla) begins work on the rock-cut temples at Mahabalipuram	about 642 A.D.
8.	Alauddin Khalji becomes Sultan of Delhi	about 1296 A.D.
9.	Kabir is born	about 1488 A.D.
10.	Vasco da Gama lands in Calicut	1498 A.D.
11.	Krishnadeva Raya comes to the throne	1509 A.D.
12.	Tulsidas is born	1532 A.D.
13.	Akbar starts a new religion, Din-i-Ilahi	1582 A.D.
14.	Jahangir marries Nurjahan	1611 A.D.
15.	Sir Thomas Roe visits Jahangir	1615 A.D.
16.	Shivaji is born	1627 A.D.
17.	Work starts on the Taj Mahal	1632 A.D.
18.	The Battle of Plassey	1757 A.D.
19.	Tipu Sultan's last battle (against the British)	1799 A.D.

20.	Raja Ram Mohun Roy passes away in England	1833 A.D.
21.	The Great Revolt	1857 A.D.
22.	Gandhi starts his non-cooperation movement	1857 A.D.
23.	The coming of freedom	1947 A.D.
24.	India becomes a Republic	1950 A.D.

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